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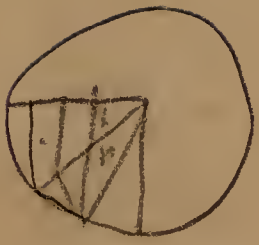

TRELAWNY'S RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST DAYS OF SHELLEY AND BYRON

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

EDWARD DOWDEN

LONDON
HUMPHREY MILFORD
1923

PRINTED IN ENGLAND
AT THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1812 3

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INTRODUCTION

If we desire to make acquaintance with Shelley in the full maturity of his character and his genius, after the study of his later writings in verse and prose, we turn first to this book by Trelawny. It is the record of a direct, competent, and sympathetic witness. We see through its pages the living man as he looked and moved, as he spoke and acted. Trelawny's observation of Byron was as keen and penetrating, but it was less sympathetic, and we are not without other witnesses who speak with authority of Byron's last days. Apart from what he has to tell of the two great poets who accepted him as a companion and a friend, Trelawny is well worth knowing for his own sake. If he was something less than a great man, he was certainly a man of striking originality and force of character, a 'nature', as Goethe might have called him, an Englishman of a type that is not common, though perhaps among our makers of empire there have been some who resembled Trelawny, yet who submitted, as he never did, to discipline and a law of dutiful obedience. This is what the book gives us—three living and breathing figures, one, as Trelawny conceived him, not without certain innocent and attaching human infirmities, yet admirable and lovable in noble and beautiful manhood; the second, of the breed of the Titans, but a Titan deformed in mind as well as in body; the third, Trelawny himself, the adventurer of romance, generous, courageous, self-willed, with

a touch of devil-may-care recklessness and pride. All three were young; Byron, the eldest, was only thirty-six when he died; and, though the book was the work of Trelawny's more advanced years, his vivid recollection of the past, like 'proud-pied April' in Shakespeare's sonnet, 'hath put a spirit of youth in every thing'.

The *Recollections* appeared, as it is here reprinted, first in the year 1858. Twenty years later it was republished in an enlarged form and with an altered title:—

'Records of | Shelley, Byron, | and the author | by | Edward John Trelawny | Vol. I [Vol. II] London | Basil Montagu Pickering | 196 Piccadilly | 1878.' Pickering's mark, the anchor and dolphin, with the inscription 'Aldi. Discip. Anglus.', appears between 'Vol. I [II]' and 'London'.

The additions made in the *Records* are considerable in bulk; a Preface of two pages and a text of 304 pages have grown to a Preface of thirteen pages and a text of 214 + 245 pages.

These additions to the original work fall in the main into three classes: new or expanded conversations (with Shelley, Mary Shelley, Byron, Byron's attendant Fletcher, the publisher Murray); documents and letters previously unpublished; reflections, comment, narrative by the author. The added letters and documents are sometimes valuable; the conversations are sometimes of interest; the narrative, with some slight augmentations, remains substantially the same; the comments and reflections of Trelawny himself are in general of little worth, or of none. Opinions may not unreasonably differ as to the respective values of the two forms of the book. Dr. Garnett has given it as his verdict that 'every alteration in the text is a change for the worse'.

This, if the word 'alteration' be meant to include additions, is perhaps too unqualified a judgement; but it is true that while, as Dr. Garnett acknowledges, the *Records* is the fuller source of materials, the *Recollections* is the better book. It contains less that is trivial, less that is irrelevant, less that is banal, and it does not digress into passages of Shelley's or Byron's story with which Trelawny had neither any direct acquaintance, nor even any authentic and trustworthy information. In a few instances the later edition materially alters statements made in the *Recollections*. Thus, for example, the volume found in one of Shelley's pockets after his body had been washed ashore, is Sophocles in the earlier text (p. 80); in the later it is Aeschylus. But Sophocles it was, as the *Recollections* state, if the volume now preserved in the Bodleian Library be that which Shelley had with him on the day of his disastrous voyage. A more curious variation of statement may be noticed in a matter about which error or uncertainty should have been impossible with Trelawny. When, four or five days after the death of Byron, he visited the chamber in which the body lay embalmed in its coffin, curiosity tempted Trelawny to take advantage of a moment during which he contrived to be alone with the dead, and ascertain by actual inspection the cause of Byron's lameness. 'I uncovered the Pilgrim's feet'—so we read in the *Recollections* (p. 149)—'and was answered—the great mystery was solved. Both his feet were clubbed, and his legs withered to the knee—the form and features of an Apollo, with the feet and legs of a sylvan satyr.' In the *Records* of twenty years later the passage runs thus: 'I uncovered the Pilgrim's feet, and was answered—it was caused by the contraction of the back sinews, which the doctors

call "Tendon Achilles", that prevented his heels resting on the ground, and compelled him to walk on the fore part of his feet; except this defect, his feet were perfect' (vol. II, p. 130). It would have been well that Trelawny, if guilty of the indecency which he records, should have remembered the child Byron's word, when in a baby rage he cut with his whip at the nurse who had made a reference to his deformity, 'Dinna speak of it'; so we should have been spared the feeling that we are accomplices in the disclosure, and have also been spared a doubt as to the veracity of the bearer of inconsistent and irreconcilable testimonies.[1]

In several passages of the *Records*—and especially in the Appendix—the character of Mary Shelley is represented in a much less favourable light than that in which it had been exhibited in the *Recollections*. She has grown in the interval between 1858 and 1878—though dead for seven years before the earlier of these dates—less sympathetic with Shelley, poorer in intellect, more worldly, more conventional, more subject to fits of disconcerting jealousy. Letters, however, which may be found in Mrs. Marshall's *Life and Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley*, remain to prove that Trelawny was not only a warm friend of Shelley's widow but an ardent admirer, and that no apprehension of worldliness or conventionality held in check, in earlier days, the ardour of his affection. 'My name', she wrote to him nine years after her husband's death, 'will *never* be Trelawny. I am not so young as I was when you first knew me, but I am as proud. . . . You belong to women-

[1] It is stated in an article, 'Talks with Trelawny' (*Temple Bar Magazine*, May 1890), by Richard Edgcumbe, that the account of Byron's lameness given in the *Records* was founded on information supplied to Trelawny by the writer of the article.

kind in general, and Mary Shelley will *never* be yours.' It should be remembered that when the *Records* appeared, Trelawny was in his eighty-sixth year, and that all through his life he yielded overmuch to his temper. In 1858 he was in opposition when he sought to render justice to the memory of Shelley; and Trelawny loved to play a gallant part in opposition. In his Preface of 1878 he protests against those who would 'make an idol of a man'. 'When Shelley was alive', he writes, 'fanatics have asked me if he was not the worst of men; now he is dead, another set of fanatics ask me if he was not perfect.' It seemed, we may well suppose, to Trelawny that Mary Shelley had also been made the object of a cult by unwise enthusiasts, and he found some satisfaction in the attempt to bring their zeal within bounds. His part now should be to prove that Shelley's wife was not wholly made of angelic substance, that she was a very woman with abundant faults and failings of her own, and if he pushed his statements ungenerously in the direction of exaggeration, this also would be characteristic of Trelawny when in opposition.

Byron perceived this tendency to exaggeration in Trelawny, and went so far as to declare that 'even to save his life' he could not tell the truth. Yet the *Recollections* are essentially true, if not by virtue of a scrupulous conscience, then through force of genius and the vivid perception which is a part of genius. In his Preface Trelawny speaks of the matter in his volume as 'derived partly from notes taken and letters written at the time the events occurred, and partly from memory'—words which are not repeated in the Preface to the *Records*. To what extent these notes existed we cannot say, but the conversations grow surprisingly in the later form of the book.

Perhaps it is not unreasonable to conjecture that the conversations, which form so large a part of Trelawny's record, were derived largely 'from memory', or from memory upon the suggestion of some brief 'notes'. We can hardly suppose that they are literal transcripts of what was spoken. But even if they were re-created from imperfect waifs of memory, so exactly and incisively had Trelawny received the impression of the personality of Shelley and the personality of Byron, that we may take it as true that he attributes no word to either of them which might not in fact have been uttered. If there is *Dichtung*, poetic invention, as well as *Wahrheit*, literal truth, in what he tells us, the *Dichtung* is at least always framed and fashioned upon the lines of truth. A conversation with Wordsworth in the opening chapter presents a striking contrast. Trelawny had seen the poet for some minutes with his bodily eyes; he had never seen Wordsworth with the eyes of his mind; he fails signally to reproduce the Wordsworthian manner of speech. To a reader familiar with the facts of Wordsworth's life the first line of the *Recollections* might suggest that the story of Trelawny's encounter with Wordsworth in Switzerland is wholly apocryphal. The year is given as 1819, and in the summer of that year Wordsworth did not travel on the Continent. But the story is doubtless true. Trelawny's memory had played him a trick, which threw the chronology of his own movements previous to his first meeting with Shelley strangely out of position. The year was 1820, and in the *Records* this error was corrected.

Trelawny's acquaintance with Shelley was confined to the last six months of the poet's life. But with one so natural, frank, and affectionate as Shelley much could be learnt in six months. He was not

like Byron twy-formed; the poet and the man were one. He played no rôle of cynic or man of the world; he affected no pose; what he seemed to be, that in truth he was. He made no mysteries of romance or pseudo-romance. Deep deposits of pain, indeed, resulted in certain habitual reserves; but whatever in his nature was free and disengaged manifested itself with absolute simplicity and sincerity. Trelawny came with a fresh and apprehensive mind. He was not yet thirty, born in the same year with Shelley, but some three months later; not without strange experiences of life, but unwearied, and with an excellent appetite for living; not a man of many ideas or of scholarly book-learning; but at least he was free from the limitation of any torpid body of unrealized dogmas imposed on him by mere convention or authority, and, though not a scholar, he loved books that have a vital spirit in them, such as could really hold him and speak to him with a living voice. Above all he was an energetic will, a spring of activity, a coil of electric force. Such a presence was welcome in Pisa at the Tre Palazzi.

He arrived on January 14, 1822. Three weeks later Mary Shelley describes him in a letter to her friend Maria Gisborne: 'A kind of half-Arab Englishman, whose life has been as changeful as that of Anastasius, and who recounts the adventures of his youth as eloquently and well as the imagined Greek. He is clever: for his moral qualities I am yet in the dark. He is a strange web which I am endeavouring to unravel. I would fain learn if generosity is united to impetuousness, nobility of spirit to his assumption of singularity and independence. He is six feet high: raven-black hair, which curls thickly and shortly like a Moor's; dark-grey expressive eyes; overhanging brows; upturned

lips, and a smile which expresses good nature and kind-heartedness. His shoulders are high like an Oriental's; his voice is monotonous, yet emphatic; and his language, as he relates the events of his life, energetic and simple, whether the tale be one of blood and horror or of irresistible comedy. His company is delightful, for he excites me to think; and if any evil shade the intercourse, that time will unveil—the sun will rise or night darken all.' It is evident that Trelawny had at once interested Mary Shelley's imagination.

Nor did he fail to interest the imagination of Shelley. The 'Fragments of an Unfinished Drama' written in the late winter or early spring of 1822 have for the hero a transformed and glorified Trelawny. It is an idealization, not a portrait; yet the Pirate of the unfinished drama has more traits in common with the original than the Emily of the 'Epipsychidion' has with the Emilia Viviani of the Convent of St. Anna. He has no entrance nor exit in the Fragments, but he is the subject of an impassioned description. 'An Enchantress,'—so Mary Shelley gives the plot in outline—'living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her island.' The Younger Son, who had certainly wandered in the Eastern Archipelago, who had been the companion of De Ruyter in his privateering expeditions, and the

husband of the Arab Zela, half ring-dove and half fairy, with his romantic knight-errant airs and his alternating tales of the bloody pirate-deck and the oriental bower of bliss, was an apt figure for Shelley's imaginative transmutation:

> He was so awful, yet
> So beautiful in mystery and terror,
> Calming me as the loveliness of heaven
> Soothes the unquiet sea:—and yet not so,
> For he seemed stormy, and would often seem
> A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds;
> For such his thoughts, and even his actions, were;
> But he was not of them, nor they of him,
> But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
> Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
> And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.
> More need was there I should be innocent,
> More need that I should be most true and kind,
> And much more need that there should be found one
> To share remorse and scorn and solitude,
> And all the ills that wait on those who do
> The tasks of ruin in the world of life.

It is the abandoned lady who in these lines describes her pirate-lover.

In the spring of 1829 Trelawny, having recovered from the wound of the assassin's bullet and brought the chapter of his adventures in the cavern of Odysseus to a close, was in Florence. Landor and Charles Armitage Brown, the friend of Keats, were his companions. They urged him to write the story of his life; but of the story of his own life Shelley was a part, and it seemed to him that with the aid of Mary Shelley he might in telling his own tale become, in a certain degree, the poet's biographer.

'My principal object in writing to you now', he says in a letter to Mary, 'is to tell you that I am actually writing my own life. Brown and Landor are spurring me on, and are to review sheet by sheet, as it is written; moreover, I am commencing it as a tribute of my great love for the memory of Shelley, his life and moral character. Landor and Brown are in this to have a hand, therefore I am collecting every information regarding him. I always wished you to do this, Mary; if you will not, as of the living I love him and you best, incompetent as I am, I must do my best to show him to the world as I found him. Do you approve of this? Will you aid in it? without which it cannot be done. Will you give documents? Will you write anecdotes, or —be explicit on this, dear—give me your opinion; if you in the least doubt it, say so, and there is an end of it; if on the contrary, set about doing it without loss of time. Both this and my Life will be sent you to peruse and approve or alter before publication, and I need not say that you will have free scope to expunge all you disapprove of.'

Mary Shelley did not approve the design of Trelawny as far as it concerned Shelley and herself; she knew that the time for a biography of Shelley had not yet come; she shrank from publicity; she feared to rouse the cry of hostile tongues; moreover, it was her duty to think of the welfare of her son—to draw from its obscurity the true story of Shelley's life would have been to forfeit such qualified goodwill towards the boy as survived in the heart of Sir Timothy, his grandfather. She could not and would not give Trelawny the assistance he required. But as far as the record of his adventures was unconnected with Pisa and Casa Magni, she wished it good speed. 'I am glad that you are occupying yourself,'

she wrote, 'and I hope that your two friends will not cease urging you till you really put to paper the strange wild adventures you recount so well. . . . Shelley's life must be written. I hope one day to do it myself, but it must not be published now. . . . Your tribute of praise, in a way that cannot do harm, can be introduced into your own life. But remember, I pray for omission, for it is not that you will not be too kind, too eager to do me more than justice.' Trelawny submitted. In January, 1831, he told Mary Shelley that every day she became dearer to him. When towards the close of his life, in his perverse mood, he came to do final justice to the woman whom he had admired and esteemed so highly, it was in these words: 'Mrs. Shelley was of a soft, lymphatic temperament, the exact opposite to Shelley in everything; she was moping and miserable when alone, and yearning for society. Her capacity can be judged by the novels she wrote after Shelley's death, more than ordinarily commonplace and conventional. Whilst overshadowed by Shelley's greatness her faculties expanded; but when she had lost him they shrank into their natural littleness. We never know the value of anything till we have lost it, and can't replace it. The memory of how often she had irritated and vexed him tormented her after existence, and she endeavoured by rhapsodies of panegyric to compensate for the past.' (*Records*, vol. II, Appendix.) With which chivalric rendering of justice we may compare the words of Shelley himself, printed a little more than three years before his death, in the 'Advertisement' of 'Rosalind and Helen'—words in which he apologizes for retaining the introductory lines of the poem, imaging forth, as they do, the sudden relief from despondency caused by the radiant visions of an Italian sunrise: 'I can

only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend [Mary Shelley], with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than anyone to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.'

Turned aside by Mary Shelley's opposition from his first design, Trelawny occupied himself, as she had advised, with the narrative of his earlier adventures. The manuscript was ready for publication in the early autumn of 1830, and was sent from Florence to Mary Shelley.—'There is no person', wrote Trelawny, 'I have such confidence in as you, and the affair is one of confidence and trust, and are we not bound by ties stronger than those which earth has to impose?' He desired to name his book *The Life of a Man*, or *The History of a Man*, but Colburn, the publisher, preferred the title under which it was published in 1831, *The Adventures of a Younger Son*. The financial arrangements were made on Trelawny's behalf by Mary Shelley, and in consequence of her advice, supported by that of Horace Smith, a few passages and words which offended against good manners and morals were omitted.

How far *The Adventures of a Younger Son* is *Wahrheit*, how far it is *Dichtung*, cannot now be determined. The writer spoke of it, in a conversation with Mr. Richard Edgcumbe, as a faithful record of his early life; but in certain instances, where the statements can be controlled by ascertained facts, Trelawny's narrative can be shown to be highly questionable from the point of view of historical accuracy. In reading such a book, however, only a pedant would be troubled by a question of

this kind, and we may be assured that without a basis of reality such a romance could not have been written. Its best qualities have been well characterized by a writer in *The Westminster and Foreign Quarterly Review* (January, 1883) as defiant vigour of composition, scenical outline and colouring, romantic situation and poetical circumstance. The earlier pages tell of the writer's unhappy and rebellious childhood, the hardships and savagery of his schooldays, the tyranny of his superiors on board a frigate of the royal navy, the consolation and joy that came to him through his newborn passion for books, his first voyage to the East Indies, and his eventful meeting at Bombay with the wonderful and mysterious person—a cross between paladin and privateer—whom he names De Ruyter. Then the pace quickens, and the plot thickens. The story of the hero's life becomes one of unceasing and ever-varied accidents by flood and field, disastrous chances, hair-breadth escapes, with a background of 'antres vast and desarts idle', and whatever else of vividly coloured landscape the far East could yield to throw into relief the figures of the adventurers.

From the king's service on shipboard — but Mr. Edward Garnett declares that Trelawny never held warrant or commission in the navy—he makes his evasion by force and flight; he joins the amazing De Ruyter in his privateering expeditions, and, though only turned seventeen when these expeditions begin, he at once takes a commanding position in all achievements of dazzling daring or atrocity. The tumult in the air, as we now read the book, sounds like an after-clap of the Byronic thunder, reverberated from a remoter Orient. And the Eastern bride, Zela, so irresistible in her loveliness, so fawn-like in her innocent timidity, so bold through her

passion of love, now babbling her childish tendernesses, and now ready to thrust her boar-spear into the fierce old jungle hermit's side, is a sister of the heroines of Byron's *Eastern Tales*, who in 1831 had not been dismounted and removed from the marionette stage to be replaced in the puppet-box, so making room for their successors. The narrative closes with the death of Zela, which some readers have found pathetic, and the death of De Ruyter, which some readers have perhaps regarded as sublime. In an old circulating library copy of the three volume edition, which lies before me as I write, one reader has pencilled at the close of the last chapter the words 'How beautiful!' and another more hard-hearted has added the word 'Foolery!' Why did no historical critic of the circulating library continue the series of comments with the verdict 'How proper to the time and to the man'?

What Trelawny aimed at in *The Adventures of a Younger Son* he accomplished. A competent critic of recent years has pronounced it superior in imaginative vigour to the tales of Robert Louis Stevenson. The very simple psychology exhibited in the leading characters may have been an aid to vigour of presentation. Some of the passages descriptive of the aspects of sea and land in the Eastern Archipelago are unsurpassed as pieces of bold—and sometimes subtle—scene-painting.

Trelawny died in his eighty-ninth year at Sompting on August 13, 1881. After the cremation of the body at Gotha, its ashes were laid in the grave which he had purchased at Rome by the side of Shelley's grave. In his elder years the man who had been the companion of Byron and who had plucked Shelley's heart from the flames, became a centre of interest for a younger generation. His

conversation was vigorous, emphatic, startling, mordant; he often recalled the past, but not always with accuracy in details; he retained the old recklessness in his uncompromising judgements of men and things. A 'Reminiscence of Trelawny' which appeared in *The Pall Mall Gazette* (August 19, 1881) gives a spirited sketch of the old man at a date shortly before the end. The visitors found him in an arm-chair in a small old-fashioned room of his cottage near Worthing. Although past eighty-eight he had only lately given over the habit of bathing in the sea at all seasons, and that of warming himself on the coldest mornings by the exercise of wood-chopping. Yet now he sat in a shrunken attitude, his hands upon his knees, as if in the decrepitude of extreme age. 'He wore an embroidered red cap, of the unbecoming shape in use in Byron's days, with a stiff projecting peak . . . . In the ashen colour of the face, the rough grey hair and beard, the hard, clear, aquiline profile, and the strong, masterful, scowling, grey eye, there were traces of something both more distinguished and more formidable than is seen in Mr. Millais' likeness of him in the "North-West Passage"—a likeness with which he himself was much dissatisfied.'

At first the talk was on commonplace matters, and Trelawny spoke in a weak and muffled voice: 'By and by he began to rouse himself, and then his conversation became, at least at intervals, curiously impressive . . . . From time to time the old man would rise, almost bound, up in his chair, with his eyes fastened on yours like a vice, and in tones of incredible power would roar what he had to say to you into your face.' After a time the impatience of a couple of black-and-tan terriers suggested that the hour had come when their master was accustomed

to take them for a walk. One of the visitors on parting congratulated Trelawny, with conventional courtesy, on his looking so well, whereupon he could be heard growling: 'S' very well, s' very well; that's the kind of lies I was talking of; lies, lies, lies.' His last words, however, were kindly: 'I shall never forget', writes the narrator, 'the image of this old, hard, keen-faced, blunt-spoken, strong-voiced survivor of the age of heroes, as he stood growling, but not unkindly, on his doorstep.' So greatly had transforming time wrought upon Mary Shelley's superb half-Arab Englishman.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

From the original picture by Clint

RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE

LAST DAYS OF

SHELLEY AND BYRON.

BY

E. J. TRELAWNY.

"No living poet ever arrived at the fulness of his fame; the jury which sits in judgment upon a poet, belonging as he does to all time, must be composed of his peers: it must be impannelled by Time from the seleetest of the wise of many generations."

SHELLEY'S *Defence of Poetry.*

LONDON:

EDWARD MOXON, DOVER STREET.

1858.

PREFACE.

Any details of the lives of men whose opinions have had a marked influence upon mankind, or from whose works we have derived pleasure or profit, cannot but be interesting. This conviction induces me to record some facts regarding Shelley and Byron, two of the last of the true Poets. The matter contained in this small Volume concerning them is derived partly from notes taken and letters written at the time the events occurred, and partly from memory. I wrote what is now printed, not systematically, but just as the incidents occurred to me, thinking that with the rough draft before me it would be an easy, if not an agreeable, task to re-write the whole in a connected form; but my plan is marred by my idleness or want of literary dexterity. I therefore commit the rough draft to the printer as first written, in 'most admired disorder'.

With reference to the likeness of Shelley in this Volume, I must add, that he never sat to a professional artist. In 1819, at Rome, a daughter of the celebrated Curran began a portrait of him in oil, which she never finished, and left in an altogether flat and inanimate state. In 1821 or 1822, his friend

Williams made a spirited water-colour drawing, which gave a very good idea of the Poet. Out of these materials Mrs. Williams, on her return to England after the death of Shelley, got Clint to compose a portrait, which the few who knew Shelley in the last year of his life thought very like him. The water-colour drawing has been lost, so that the portrait done by Clint is the only one of any value. I have had it copied and lithographed by Mr. Vinter, an artist distinguished both for the fidelity and refinement of his works, and it is now published for the first time.

February, 1858.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LAST DAYS OF SHELLEY AND BYRON

CHAPTER I

Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude:
In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty.
Sonnet to Wordsworth.—SHELLEY.

IN the summer of 1819 I was at Ouchy, a village on the margin of the lake of Geneva, in the Canton de Vaux. The most intelligent person I could find in the neighbourhood to talk to, was a young bookseller at Lausanne, educated at a German University; he was familiar with the works of many most distinguished writers; his reading was not confined, as it generally is with men of his craft, to catalogues and indexes, for he was an earnest student, and loved literature more than lucre.

As Lausanne is one of the inland harbours of refuge in which wanderers from all countries seek shelter, his shelves contained works in all languages; he was a good linguist, and read the most attractive of them. 'The elevation of minds,' he said, 'was more important than the height of mountains (I was looking at a scale of the latter), and books are the standards to measure them by.' He used to translate for me passages from the works of Schiller, Kant, Goëthe, and others, and write comments on their paradoxical, mystical, and metaphysical theories. One

morning I saw my friend sitting under the acacias on the terrace in front of the house in which Gibbon had lived, and where he wrote the *Decline and Fall*. He said, 'I am trying to sharpen my wits in this pungent air which gave such a keen edge to the great historian, so that I may fathom this book. Your modern poets, Byron, Scott, and Moore, I can read and understand as I walk along, but I have got hold of a book by one now that makes me stop to take breath and think.' It was Shelley's *Queen Mab*. As I had never heard that name or title, I asked how he got the volume. 'With a lot of new books in English, which I took in exchange for old French ones. Not knowing the names of the authors, I might not have looked into them, had not a pampered, prying priest smelt this one in my lumber-room, and, after a brief glance at the notes, exploded in wrath, shouting out "Infidel, jacobin, leveller: nothing can stop this spread of blasphemy but the stake and the faggot; the world is retrograding into accursed heathenism and universal anarchy!" When the priest had departed, I took up the small book he had thrown down, saying, "Surely there must be something here worth tasting." You know the proverb "No person throws a stone at a tree that does not bear fruit."'

'Priests do not,' I answered; 'so I, too, must have a bite of the forbidden fruit. What do you think of it?'

'To my taste,' said the bookseller, 'the fruit is crude, but well flavoured; it requires a strong stomach to digest it; the writer is an enthusiast, and has the true spirit of a poet; he aims at regenerating, not like Byron and Moore, levelling mankind. They say he is but a boy, and this his first offering: if that be true, we shall hear of him again.'

Some days after this conversation I walked to

Lausanne, to breakfast at the hotel with an old friend, Captain Daniel Roberts, of the Navy. He was out, sketching, but presently came in accompanied by two English ladies, with whom he had made acquaintance whilst drawing, and whom he brought to our hotel. The husband of one of them soon followed. I saw by their utilitarian garb, as well as by the blisters and blotches on their cheeks, lips, and noses, that they were pedestrian tourists, fresh from the snow-covered mountains, the blazing sun and frosty air having acted on their unseasoned skins, as boiling water does on the lobster, by dyeing his dark coat scarlet. The man was evidently a denizen of the north, his accent harsh, skin white, of an angular and bony build, and self-confident and dogmatic in his opinions. The precision and quaintness of his language, as well as his eccentric remarks on common things, stimulated my mind. Our icy islanders thaw rapidly when they have drifted into warmer latitudes: broken loose from its anti-social system, mystic casts, coteries, sets and sects, they lay aside their purse-proud, tuft-hunting, and toadying ways, and are very apt to run riot in the enjoyment of all their senses. Besides we are compelled to talk in strange company, if not from good breeding, to prove our breed, as the gift of speech is often our principal if not sole distinction from the rest of the brute animals.

To return to our breakfast. The travellers, flushed with health, delighted with their excursion, and with appetites earned by bodily and mental activity, were in such high spirits that Roberts and I caught the infection of their mirth; we talked as loud and fast as if under the exhilarating influence of champagne, instead of such a sedative compound as *café au lait*. I can rescue nothing out of oblivion but a few last

words. The stranger expressed his disgust at the introduction of carriages into the mountain districts of Switzerland, and at the old fogies who used them.

'As to the arbitrary, pitiless, Godless wretches,' he exclaimed, 'who have removed nature's landmarks by cutting roads through Alps and Apennines, until all things are reduced to the same dead level, they will be arraigned hereafter with the unjust: they have robbed the best specimens of what men should be, of their freeholds in the mountains; the eagle, the black cock, and the red deer they have tamed or exterminated. The lover of nature can nowhere find a solitary nook to contemplate her beauties. Yesterday,' he continued, 'at the break of day, I scaled the most rugged height within my reach; it looked inaccessible; this pleasant delusion was quickly dispelled; I was rudely startled out of a deep reverie by the accursed jarring, jingling, and rumbling of a calêche, and harsh voices that drowned the torrent's fall.'

The stranger, now hearing a commotion in the street, sprang on his feet, looked out of the window, and rang the bell violently.

'Waiter,' he said, 'is that our carriage? Why did you not tell us? Come, lasses, be stirring, the freshness of the day is gone. You may rejoice in not having to walk; there is a chance of saving the remnants of skin the sun has left on our chins and noses,—to-day we shall be stewed instead of barbecued.'

On their leaving the room to get ready for their journey, my friend Roberts told me the strangers were the poet Wordsworth, his wife and sister.

Who could have divined this? I could see no trace, in the hard features and weather-stained brow

of the outer-man, of the divinity within him. In a few minutes the travellers re-appeared; we cordially shook hands, and agreed to meet again at Geneva. Now that I knew that I was talking to one of the veterans of the gentle craft, as there was no time to waste in idle ceremony, I asked him abruptly what he thought of Shelley as a poet?

'Nothing,' he replied, as abruptly.

Seeing my surprise, he added, 'A poet who has not produced a good poem before he is twenty-five, we may conclude cannot, and never will do so.'

'The Cenci!' I said eagerly.

'Won't do,' he replied, shaking his head, as he got into the carriage: a rough-coated Scotch terrier followed him.

'This hairy fellow is our flea-trap,' he shouted out, as they started off.

When I recovered from the shock of having heard the harsh sentence passed by an elder bard on a younger brother of the Muses, I exclaimed,

After all, poets are but earth. It is the old story, —Envy—Cain and Abel. Professions, sects, and communities in general, right or wrong, hold together, men of the pen excepted; if one of their guild is worsted in the battle, they do as the rooks do by their inky brothers, fly from him, cawing and screaming; if they don't fire the shot, they sound the bugle to charge.

I did not then know that the full-fledged author never reads the writings of his cotemporaries, except to cut them up in a review,—that being a work of love. In after-years, Shelley being dead, Wordsworth confessed this fact; he was then induced to read some of Shelley's poems, and admitted that Shelley was the greatest master of harmonious verse in our modern literature.

CHAPTER II

> Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake
> With the wide world I dwelt in, is a thing
> Which warns me with its stillness to forsake
> Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
>
> CHILDE HAROLD.

SHORTLY after I went to Geneva. In the largest country-house (Plangeau) near that city lived a friend of mine, a Cornish baronet, a good specimen of the old school; well read, and polished by long intercourse with intelligent men of many nations. He retained a custom of the old barons, now obsolete,—his dining-hall was open to all his friends; you were welcomed at his table as often as it suited you to go there, without the ceremony of inconvenient invitations.

At this truly hospitable house, I first saw three young men, recently returned from India. They lived together at a pretty villa (*Maison aux Grénades*, signifying the House of Pomegranates), situated on the shores of the lake, and at an easy walk from the city of Geneva and the baronet's. Their names were George Jervoice, of the Madras Artillery; E. E. Williams, and Thomas Medwin, the two last, lieutenants on half-pay, late of the 8th Dragoons. Medwin was the chief medium that impressed us with a desire to know Shelley; he had known him from childhood; he talked of nothing but the inspired boy, his virtues and his sufferings, so that, irrespective of his genius, we all longed to know him. From all I could gather from him, Shelley lived as he wrote, the life of a true

poet, loving solitude, but by no means a cynic. In the two or three months I was at Geneva, I passed many agreeable days at the two villas I have mentioned. Late in the autumn I was unexpectedly called to England; Jervoice and Medwin went to Italy; the Williams's determined on passing the winter at Chalons sur Saône. I offered to drive them there, in a light Swiss carriage of my own; and in the spring to rejoin them, and to go on to Italy together in pursuit of Shelley.

Human animals can only endure a limited amount of pain or pleasure, excess of either is followed by insensibility. The Williams's, satiated with felicity at their charming villa on the cheerful lake of Geneva, resolved to leave it, and see how long they could exist deprived of everything they had been accustomed to. With such an object, a French provincial town was just the place to try the experiment. Chalons sur Saône was decided on. We commenced our journey in November, in an open carriage. After four days' drive through wind, rain, and mud, we arrived at Chalons in a sorry plight. The immense plain which surrounded the town was flooded; we took up our quarters at an hotel on the slimy banks of the Saône. What a contrast to the villa of pomegranates we had left, we all thought—but said nothing.

When I left them by the *malle poste*, on my way to Paris, I felt as a man should feel when, stranded on a barren rock, he seizes the only boat and pushes off to the nearest land, leaving his forlorn comrades to perish miserably. After a course of spare diet of soupe maigre, bouilli, sour wine, and solitary confinement had restored their senses, they departed in the spring for the south, and never looked behind them until they had crossed the Alps. They went

direct to the Shelleys; and amongst Williams's letters I find his first impressions of the poet, which I here transcribe:

Pisa, *April*, 1821.

My dear Trelawny,

We purpose wintering in Florence, and sheltering ourselves from the summer heat at a castle of a place, called Villa Poschi, at Pugnano, two leagues from hence, where, with Shelley for a companion, I promise myself a great deal of pleasure, sauntering in the shady retreats of the olive and chesnut woods that grow above our heads up the hill sides. He has a small boat building, only ten or twelve feet long, to go adventuring, as he calls it, up the many little rivers and canals that intersect this part of Italy; some of which pass through the most beautiful scenery imaginable, winding among the terraced gardens at the base of the neighbouring mountains, and opening into such lakes as Beintina, &c.

Shelley is certainly a man of most astonishing genius in appearance, extraordinarily young, of manners mild and amiable, but withal full of life and fun. His wonderful command of language, and the ease with which he speaks on what are generally considered abstruse subjects, are striking; in short, his ordinary conversation is akin to poetry, for he sees things in the most singular and pleasing lights: if he wrote as he talked, he would be popular enough. Lord Byron and others think him by far the most imaginative poet of the day. The style of his lordship's letters to him is quite that of a pupil, such as asking his opinion, and demanding his advice on certain points, &c. I must tell you, that the idea of the tragedy of Manfred, and many of the philosophical, or rather metaphysical, notions interwoven

in the composition of the fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, are of his suggestion; but this, of course, is between ourselves. A few nights ago I nearly put an end to the Poet and myself. We went to Leghorn, to see after the little boat, and, as the wind blew excessively hard, and fair, we resolved upon returning to Pisa in her, and accordingly started with a huge sail, and at 10 o'clock p.m. capsized her.

I commenced this letter yesterday morning, but was prevented from continuing it by the very person of whom I am speaking, who, having heard me complain of a pain in my chest since the time of our ducking, brought with him a doctor, and I am now writing to you in bed, with a blister on the part supposed to be affected. I am ordered to lie still and try to sleep, but I prefer sitting up and bringing this sheet to a conclusion. A General R., an Englishman, has been poisoned by his daughter and her paramour, a Venetian servant, by small doses of arsenic, so that the days of the Cenci are revived, with this difference, that crimes seem to strengthen with keeping. Poor Beatrice was driven to parricide by long and unendurable outrages: in this last case, the parent was sacrificed by the lowest of human passions, the basis of many crimes. By the by, talking of Beatrice and the Cenci, I have a horrid history to tell you of that unhappy girl, that it is impossible to put on paper: you will not wonder at the act, but admire the virtue (an odd expression, you will perhaps think) that inspired the blow. Adieu. Jane desires to be very kindly remembered, and believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

E. E. Williams.

In a subsequent letter he gave me a foretaste of what I might expect to find in Lord Byron.

Pisa, *December*, 1821.

My dear Trelawny,

Why, how is this? I will swear that yesterday was Christmas day, for I celebrated it at a splendid feast given by Lord Byron to what I call his Pistol Club—i. e. to Shelley, Medwin, a Mr. Taaffe, and myself, and was scarcely awake from the vision of it when your letter was put into my hands, dated 1st of *January*, 1822. Time flies fast enough, but you, in the rapidity of your motions, contrive to outwing the old fellow; rather take a plume or two from your mental pinions, and add them, like Mercury to your heels, and let us see you before another year draws upon us. Forty years hence, my lad, you will treat the present with more respect than to *ante*-date the coming one. But I hope that time with you will always fly as unheeded as it now appears to do. Lord Byron is the very spirit of this place,—that is, to those few to whom, like Mokannah, he has lifted his veil. When you asked me, in your last letter, if it was probable to become at all intimate with him, I replied in a manner which I considered it most prudent to do, from motives which are best explained when I see you. Now, however, I know him a great deal better, and think I may safely say that that point will rest entirely with yourself. The eccentricities of an assumed character, which a total retirement from the world almost rendered a natural one, are daily wearing off. He sees none of the numerous English who are here, excepting those I have named. And of this, I am selfishly glad, for one sees nothing of a man in mixed societies. It is difficult to move him, he says, when he is once fixed,

but he seems bent upon joining our party at Spezzia next summer.

I shall reserve all that I have to say about the boat until we meet at the select committee, which is intended to be held on that subject when you arrive here. Have a boat we must, and if we can get Roberts to build her, so much the better. We are settled here for the winter, perhaps many winters, for we have taken apartments and furnished them. This is a step that anchors a man at once, nay, moors him head and stern: you will find us at the Tre Palazzi, 349, Lung' Arno. Pray, remember me to Roberts; tell him he must be content to take me by the hand, though he should not discover a pipe *in* my mouth, or mustachios on it,—the first makes me sick, and the last makes Jane so.

Bring with you any new books you may have. There is a Mrs. B. here, with a litter of seven daughters, she is the gayest lady, and the only one who gives dances, for the young squaws are arriving at that age, when as Lord Byron says, they must waltz for their livelihood. When a man gets on this strain, the sooner he concludes his letter the better. Addio. Believe me,

Very truly yours,

E. E. Williams.

CHAPTER III

O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert.

Adonais.—SHELLEY.

I WAS not accustomed to the town life I was then leading, and became as tired of society as townfolks are of solitude. The great evil in solitude is, that your brain lies idle; your muscles expand by exercise, and your wits contract from the want of it.

To obviate this evil and maintain the just equilibrium between the body and the brain, I determined to pass the coming winter in the wildest part of Italy, the Maremma, in the midst of the marshes and malaria, with my friends Roberts and Williams; keen sportsmen both—that part of the country being well stocked with woodcocks and wild fowl. For this purpose, I shipped an ample supply of dogs, guns, and other implements of the chace to Leghorn. For the exercise of my brain, I proposed passing my summer with Shelley and Byron, boating in the Mediterranean. After completing my arrangements, I started in the autumn by the French malle-poste, from Paris to Chalons, regained possession of the horse and cabriolet I had left with Williams, and drove myself to Geneva, where Roberts was waiting for me. After a short delay, I continued my journey south with Roberts in my Swiss carriage, so that we could go on or stop, where and when we pleased.

By our method of travelling, we could sketch, shoot, fish, and observe everything at our leisure. If our progress was slow, it was most pleasant. We crossed Mount Cenis, and in due course arrived at Genoa. After a long stop at that city of painted palaces, anxious to see the Poet, I drove to Pisa alone. I arrived late, and after putting up my horse at the inn and dining, hastened to the Tre Palazzi, on the Lung' Arno, where the Shelleys and Williams's lived on different flats under the same roof, as is the custom on the Continent. The Williams's received me in their earnest cordial manner; we had a great deal to communicate to each other, and were in loud and animated conversation, when I was rather put out by observing in the passage near the open door, opposite to where I sat, a pair of glittering eyes steadily fixed on mine; it was too dark to make out whom they belonged to. With the acuteness of a woman, Mrs. Williams's eyes followed the direction of mine, and going to the doorway, she laughingly said,

'Come in, Shelley, it's only our friend Tre just arrived.'

Swiftly gliding in, blushing like a girl, a tall thin stripling held out both his hands; and although I could hardly believe as I looked at his flushed, feminine, and artless face that it could be the Poet, I returned his warm pressure. After the ordinary greetings and courtesies he sat down and listened. I was silent from astonishment: was it possible this mild-looking, beardless boy, could be the veritable monster at war with all the world?—excommunicated by the Fathers of the Church, deprived of his civil rights by the fiat of a grim Lord Chancellor, discarded by every member of his family, and denounced by the rival sages of our literature as the founder of a

Satanic school? I could not believe it; it must be a hoax. He was habited like a boy, in a black jacket and trowsers, which he seemed to have outgrown, or his tailor, as is the custom, had most shamefully stinted him in his 'sizings.' Mrs. Williams saw my embarrassment, and to relieve me asked Shelley what book he had in his hand? His face brightened, and he answered briskly.

'Calderon's *Magico Prodigioso*, I am translating some passages in it.'

'Oh, read it to us!'

Shoved off from the shore of common-place incidents that could not interest him, and fairly launched on a theme that did, he instantly became oblivious of everything but the book in his hand. The masterly manner in which he analysed the genius of the author, his lucid interpretation of the story, and the ease with which he translated into our language the most subtle and imaginative passages of the Spanish poet, were marvellous, as was his command of the two languages. After this touch of his quality I no longer doubted his identity; a dead silence ensued; looking up, I asked,

'Where is he?'

Mrs. Williams said, 'Who? Shelley? Oh, he comes and goes like a spirit, no one knows when or where.'

Presently he re-appeared with Mrs. Shelley. She brought us back from the ideal world Shelley had left us in, to the real one, welcomed me to Italy, and asked me the news of London and Paris, the new books, operas, and bonnets, marriages, murders, and other marvels. The Poet vanished, and tea appeared. Mary Woolstoncraft (the authoress), the wife of William Godwin, died in 1797, in giving birth to their only child, Mary, married to the poet Shelley; so that at the time I am speaking of Mrs. Shelley

was twenty-seven. Such a rare pedigree of genius was enough to interest me in her, irrespective of her own merits as an authoress. The most striking feature in her face was her calm, grey eyes; she was rather under the English standard of woman's height, very fair and light-haired, witty, social, and animated in the society of friends, though mournful in solitude; like Shelley, though in a minor degree, she had the power of expressing her thoughts in varied and appropriate words, derived from familiarity with the works of our vigorous old writers. Neither of them used obsolete or foreign words. This command of our language struck me the more as contrasted with the scanty vocabulary used by ladies in society, in which a score of poor hackneyed phrases suffice to express all that is felt or considered proper to reveal.

CHAPTER IV

> This should have been a noble creature—he
> Hath all the energy which would have made
> A goodly frame of glorious elements
> Had they been wisely mingled.
>
> MANFRED.

AT two o'clock on the following day, in company with Shelley, I crossed the Ponte Vecchio, and went on the Lung' Arno to the Palazzo Lanfranchi, the residence of Lord Byron. We entered a large marble hall, ascended a giant staircase, passed through an equally large room over the hall, and were shown into a smaller apartment which had books and a billiard-table in it. A surly-looking bull-dog (Moretto) announced us, by growling, and the Pilgrim instantly advanced from an inner chamber, and stood before us. His halting gait was apparent, but he moved with quickness; and although pale, he looked as fresh, vigorous, and animated, as any man I ever saw. His pride, added to his having lived for many years alone, was the cause I suppose that he was embarrassed at first meeting with strangers; this he tried to conceal by an affectation of ease. After the interchange of common-place question and answer, he regained his self-possession, and turning to Shelley, said,

'As you are addicted to poesy, go and read the versicles I was delivered of last night, or rather this morning—that is, if you can. I am posed. I am getting scurrilous. There is a letter from Tom Moore; read, you are blarneyed in it ironically.'

He then took a cue, and asked me to play billiards; he struck the balls and moved about the table briskly, but neither played the game nor cared a rush about it, and chatted after this idle fashion:

'The purser of the frigate I went to Constantinople in called an officer *scurrilous* for alluding to his wig. Now, the day before I mount a wig—and I shall soon want one—I'll ride about with it on the pummel of my saddle, or stick it on my cane.

'In that same frigate, near the Dardanelles, we nearly ran down an American trader with his cargo of notions. Our captain, old Bathurst, hailed, and with the dignity of a Lord, asked him where he came from, and the name of his ship. The Yankee captain bellowed,—

'"You copper-bottomed sarpent, I guess you'll know when I've reported you to Congress."'

The surprise I expressed by my looks was not at what he said, but that he could register such trifles in his memory. Of course with other such small anecdotes, his great triumph at having swum from Sestos to Abydos was not forgotten. I had come prepared to see a solemn mystery, and so far as I could judge from the first act it seemed to me very like a solemn farce. I forgot that great actors when off the stage are dull dogs; and that even the mighty Prospero, without his book and magic mantle, was but an ordinary mortal. At this juncture Shelley joined us; he never laid aside his book and magic mantle; he waved his wand, and Byron, after a faint show of defiance, stood mute; his quick perception of the truth of Shelley's comments on his poem transfixed him, and Shelley's earnestness and just criticism held him captive.

I was however struck with Byron's mental vivacity and wonderful memory; he defended himself with a

variety of illustrations, precedents, and apt quotations from modern authorities, disputing Shelley's propositions, not by denying their truth as a whole, but in parts, and the subtle questions he put would have puzzled a less acute reasoner than the one he had to contend with. During this discussion I scanned the Pilgrim closely.

In external appearance Byron realised that ideal standard with which imagination adorns genius. He was in the prime of life, thirty-five; of middle height, five feet eight and a half inches; regular features, without a stain or furrow on his pallid skin, his shoulders broad, chest open, body and limbs finely proportioned. His small, highly-finished head and curly hair, had an airy and graceful appearance from the massiveness and length of his throat: you saw his genius in his eyes and lips. In short, Nature could do little more than she had done for him, both in outward form and in the inward spirit she had given to animate it. But all these rare gifts to his jaundiced imagination only served to make his one personal defect (lameness) the more apparent, as a flaw is magnified in a diamond when polished; and he brooded over that blemish as sensitive minds will brood until they magnify a wart into a wen.

His lameness certainly helped to make him sceptical, cynical, and savage. There was no peculiarity in his dress, it was adapted to the climate; a tartan jacket braided,—he said it was the Gordon pattern, and that his mother was of that ilk. A blue velvet cap with a gold band, and very loose nankeen trousers, strapped down so as to cover his feet: his throat was not bare, as represented in drawings. At three o'clock, one of his servants announced that his horses were at the door, which broke off his discussion with Shelley, and we all followed him to the hall. At the

outer door, we found three or four very ordinary-looking horses; they had holsters on the saddles, and many other superfluous trappings, such as the Italians delight in, and Englishmen eschew. Shelley, and an Irish visitor just announced, mounted two of these sorry jades. I luckily had my own cattle. Byron got into a calêche, and did not mount his horse until we had cleared the gates of the town, to avoid, as he said, being stared at by the 'd—d Englishers,' who generally congregated before his house on the Arno. After an hour or two of slow riding and lively talk,—for he was generally in good spirits when on horseback,—we stopped at a small *podere* on the roadside, and dismounting went into the house, in which we found a table with wine and cakes. From thence we proceeded into the vineyard at the back; the servant brought two brace of pistols, a cane was stuck in the ground and a five paul-piece, the size of half-a-crown, placed in a slit at the top of the cane. Byron, Shelley, and I, fired at fifteen paces, and one of us generally hit the cane or the coin: our firing was pretty equal; after five or six shots each, Byron pocketed the battered money and sauntered about the grounds. We then remounted. On our return homewards, Shelley urged Byron to complete something he had begun. Byron smiled and replied,

'John Murray, my patron and paymaster, says my plays won't act. I don't mind that, for I told him they were not written for the stage—but he adds, my poesy won't sell: that I do mind, for I have an "itching palm." He urges me to resume my old "Corsair style, to please the ladies."'

Shelley indignantly answered,

'That is very good logic for a bookseller, but not for an author: the shop interest is to supply the ephemeral demand of the day. It is not for him but

you "to put a ring in the monster's nose" to keep him from mischief.'

Byron smiling at Shelley's warmth, said,

'John Murray is right, if not righteous: all I have yet written has been for women-kind; you must wait until I am forty, their influence will then die a natural death, and I will show the men what I can do.'

Shelley replied,

'Do it now—write nothing but what your conviction of its truth inspires you to write; you should give counsel to the wise, and not take it from the foolish. Time will reverse the judgment of the vulgar. Cotemporary criticism only represents the amount of ignorance genius has to contend with.'

I was then and afterwards pleased and surprised at Byron's passiveness and docility in listening to Shelley —but all who heard him felt the charm of his simple, earnest manner; while Byron knew him to be exempt from the egotism, pedantry, coxcombry, and, more than all, the rivalry of authorship, and that he was the truest and most discriminating of his admirers.

Byron looking at the western sky, exclaimed,

'Where is the green your friend the Laker talks such fustian about,' meaning Coleridge—

> 'Gazing on the western sky,
> And its peculiar tint of yellow green.
> *Dejection: an Ode.*

'Who ever,' asked Byron, 'saw a green sky?'

Shelley was silent, knowing that if he replied, Byron would give vent to his spleen. So I said, 'The sky in England is oftener green than blue.'

'Black, you mean,' rejoined Byron; and this discussion brought us to his door.

As he was dismounting he mentioned two odd words that would rhyme. I observed on the felicity he had shown in this art, repeating a couplet out of *Don Juan*; he was both pacified and pleased at this, and putting his hand on my horse's crest, observed,

'If you are curious in these matters, look in Swift. I will send you a volume; he beats us all hollow, his rhymes are wonderful.'

And then we parted for that day, which I have been thus particular in recording, not only as it was the first of our acquaintance, but as containing as fair a sample as I can give of his appearance, ordinary habits, and conversation.

CHAPTER V

His house, his home, his heritage, his lands,
The laughing dames in whom he did delight.
. . . . . .
Without a sigh he left, to cross the brine
And traverse Paynim shores and pass Earth's central line.
CHILDE HAROLD.

MEN of books, particularly Poets, are rarely men of action, their mental energy exhausts their bodily powers. Byron has been generally considered an exception to this rule, he certainly so considered himself: let us look at the facts.

In 1809, he first left England, rode on horseback through Spain and Portugal, 400 miles, crossed the Mediterranean on board a frigate, and landed in Greece; where he passed two years in sauntering through a portion of that small country: this, with a trip to Smyrna, Constantinople, Malta, and Gibraltar, generally on board our men-of-war, where you have all the ease, comfort, and most of the luxuries of your own homes;—this is the extent of the voyages and travels he was so proud of. Anything more luxurious than sailing on those seas, and riding through those lands, and in such a blessed climate, I know from experience, is not to be found in this world. Taking into account the result of these travels as shown in his works, he might well boast; he often said, if he had ever written a line worth preserving, it was Greece that inspired it. After this trip he returned to England, and remained there some years, four or five; then abandoned it for ever, passed

through the Netherlands, went up the Rhine, paused for some months in Switzerland, crossed the Alps into Italy, and never left that peninsula until the last year of his life. He was never in France, for when he left England, Paris was in the hands of the Allies, and he said he could not endure to witness a country associated in his mind with so many glorious deeds of arts and arms, bullied by 'certain rascal officers, slaves in authority, the knaves of justice!'

To return, however, to his travels. If you look at a map you will see what a narrow circle comprises his wanderings. Any man might go, and many have gone without the aid of steam, over the same ground in a few months—even if he had to walk with a knapsack, where Byron rode. The Pilgrim moved about like a Pasha, with a host of attendants, and all that he and they required on the journey. So far as I could learn from Fletcher, his yeoman bold—and he had been with him from the time of his first leaving England,—Byron wherever he was, so far as it was practicable, pursued the same lazy, dawdling habits he continued during the time I knew him. He was seldom out of his bed before noon, when he drank a cup of very strong green tea, without sugar or milk. At two he ate a biscuit and drank soda-water. At three he mounted his horse and sauntered along the road—and generally the same road,—if alone, racking his brains for fitting matter and rhymes for the coming poem, he dined at seven, as frugally as anchorites are said in story-books to have done, at nine he visited the family of Count Gamba, on his return home he sat reading or composing until two or three o'clock in the morning, and then to bed, often feverish, restless and exhausted —to dream, as he said, more than to sleep.

Something very urgent, backed by the importunity of those who had influence over him, could alone induce him to break through the routine I have described, for a day, and it was certain to be resumed on the next,—he was constant in this alone.

His conversation was anything but literary, except when Shelley was near him. The character he most commonly appeared in was of the free and easy sort, such as had been in vogue when he was in London, and George IV was Regent; and his talk was seasoned with anecdotes of the great actors on and off the stage, boxers, gamblers, duellists, drunkards, &c., &c., appropriately garnished with the slang and scandal of that day. Such things had all been in fashion, and were at that time considered accomplishments by gentlemen; and of this tribe of Mohawks the Prince Regent was the chief, and allowed to be the most perfect specimen. Byron, not knowing the tribe was extinct, still prided himself on having belonged to it; of nothing was he more indignant, than of being treated as a man of letters, instead of as a Lord and a man of fashion: this prevented foreigners and literary people from getting on with him, for they invariably so offended. His long absence had not effaced the mark John Bull brands his children with; the instant he loomed above the horizon, on foot or horseback, you saw at a glance he was a Britisher. He did not understand foreigners, nor they him; and, during the time I knew him, he associated with no Italians except the family of Count Gamba. He seemed to take an especial pleasure in making a clean breast to every new comer, as if to mock their previous conceptions of him, and to give the lie to the portraits published of him. He said to me, as we were riding together alone, shortly after I knew him,

'Now, confess, you expected to find me a "Timon of Athens," or a "Timur the Tartar;" or did you think I was a mere sing-song driveller of poesy, full of what I heard Braham at a rehearsal call "*Entusamusy*;" and are you not mystified at finding me what I am,—a man of the world—never in earnest —laughing at all things mundane.'

Then he muttered, as to himself,—

'The world is a bundle of hay,
Mankind are the asses who pull.'

Any man who cultivates his intellectual faculty so highly as to seem at times inspired, would be too much above us, if, on closer inspection, we should not find it alloyed with weaknesses akin to our own. Byron soon put you at your ease on this point. Godwin, in his *Thoughts on Man*, says, 'Shakespeare, amongst all his varied characters, has not attempted to draw a perfect man;' and Pope says,—

'A perfect man's a thing the world ne'er saw.'

At any rate I should not seek for a model amongst men of the pen; they are too thin-skinned and egotistical. In his perverse and moody humours, Byron would give vent to his Satanic vein. After a long silence, one day on horseback, he began:

'I have a conscience, although the world gives me no credit for it; I am now repenting, not of the few sins I have committed, but of the many I have not committed. There are things, too, we should not do, if they were not forbidden. My *Don Juan* was cast aside and almost forgotten, until I heard that the pharisaic synod in John Murray's back parlour had pronounced it as highly immoral, and unfit for publication. "Because thou art virtuous thinkest

thou there shall be no more cakes and ale?" Now my brain is throbbing and must have vent. I opined gin was inspiration, but cant is stronger. To-day I had another letter warning me against the Snake (Shelley). He; alone, in this age of humbug, dares stem the current, as he did to-day the flooded Arno in his skiff, although I could not observe he made any progress. The attempt is better than being swept along as all the rest are, with the filthy garbage scoured from its banks.'

Taking advantage of this panegyric on Shelley, I observed, he might do him a great service at little cost, by a friendly word or two in his next work, such as he had bestowed on authors of less merit.

Assuming a knowing look, he continued,

'All trades have their mysteries; if we crack up a popular author, he repays us in the same coin, principal and interest. A friend may have repaid money lent,—can't say any of mine have; but who ever heard of the interest being added thereto?'

I rejoined,

'By your own showing you are indebted to Shelley; some of his best verses are to express his admiration of your genius.'

'Ay,' he said, with a significant look, 'who reads them? If we puffed the Snake, it might not turn out a profitable investment. If he cast off the slough of his mystifying metaphysics, he would want no puffing.'

Seeing I was not satisfied, he added,

'If we introduced Shelley to our readers, they might draw comparisons, and they are "*odorous*."'

After Shelley's death, Byron, in a letter to Moore, of the 2nd of August, 1822, says,

'There is another man gone, about whom the world was ill-naturedly, and ignorantly, and brutally

mistaken. It will, perhaps, do him justice *now*, when he can be no better for it.'

In a letter to Murray of an earlier date, he says,

'You were all mistaken about Shelley, who was without exception, the best and least selfish man I ever knew.'

And, again, he says, 'You are all mistaken about Shelley; you do not know how mild, how tolerant, how good he was.'

What Byron says of the world, that it will, perhaps, do Shelley justice when he can be no better for it, is far more applicable to himself. If the world erred, they did so in ignorance; Shelley was a myth to them. Byron had no such plea to offer, but he was neither just nor generous, and never drew his weapon to redress any wrongs but his own.

CHAPTER VI

Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please, the more because they preach in vain.
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

DON JUAN.

BYRON has been accused of drinking deeply. Our universities, certainly, did turn out more famous drinkers than scholars. In the good old times, to drink lustily was the characteristic of all Englishmen, just as tuft-hunting is now. Eternal swilling, and the rank habits and braggadocio manners which it engendered, came to a climax in George IV's reign. Since then, excessive drinking has gone out of fashion, but an elaborate style of gastronomy has come in to fill up the void; so there is not much gained. Byron used to boast of the quantity of wine he had drunk. He said, 'We young Whigs imbibed claret, and so saved our constitutions: the Tories stuck to port, and destroyed theirs and their country's.'

He bragged, too, of his prowess in riding, boxing, fencing, and even walking; but to excel in these things feet are as necessary as hands. It was difficult to avoid smiling at his boasting and self-glorification. In the water a fin is better than a foot, and in that element he did well; he was built for floating,—with a flexible body, open chest, broad beam, and round limbs. If the sea was smooth and warm, he would

stay in it for hours; but as he seldom indulged in this sport, and when he did, over-exerted himself, he suffered severely; which observing, and knowing how deeply he would be mortified at being beaten, I had the magnanimity when contending with him to give in.

He had a misgiving in his mind that I was trifling with him; and one day as we were on the shore, and the *Bolivar* at anchor, about three miles off, he insisted on our trying conclusions; we were to swim to the yacht, dine in the sea alongside of her, treading water the while, and then to return to the shore. It was calm and hot, and seeing he would not be fobbed off, we started. I reached the boat a long time before he did; ordered the edibles to be ready, and floated until he arrived. We ate our fare leisurely, from off a grating that floated alongside, drank a bottle of ale, and I smoked a cigar, which he tried to extinguish,—as he never smoked. We then put about, and struck off towards the shore. We had not got a hundred yards on our passage, when he retched violently, and, as that is often followed by cramp, I urged him to put his hand on my shoulder that I might tow him back to the schooner.

'Keep off, you villain, don't touch me. I'll drown ere I give in.'

I answered as Iago did to Roderigo,

'"A fig for drowning! drown cats and blind puppies." I shall go on board and try the effects of a glass of grog to stay my stomach.'

'Come on,' he shouted, 'I am always better after vomiting.'

With difficulty I deluded him back; I went on board, and he sat on the steps of the accommodation-ladder, with his feet in the water. I handed

him a wine-glass of brandy, and screened him from the burning sun. He was in a sullen mood, but after a time resumed his usual tone. Nothing could induce him to be landed in the schooner's boat, though I protested I had had enough of the water.

'You may do as you like,' he called out, and plumped in, and we swam on shore.

He never afterwards alluded to this event, nor to his prowess in swimming, to me, except in the past tense. He was ill, and kept his bed for two days afterwards.

To return to his drinking propensities, after this digression about his gymnastic prowess: I must say, that of all his vauntings, it was, luckily for him, the emptiest—that is, after he left England and his boon companions, as I know nothing of what he did there. From all that I heard or witnessed of his habits abroad, he was and had been exceedingly abstemious in eating and drinking. When alone, he drank a glass or two of small claret or hock, and when utterly exhausted at night a single glass of grog; which when I mixed it for him I lowered to what sailors call 'water bewitched,' and he never made any remark. I once, to try him, omitted the alcohol; he then said, 'Tre, have you not forgotten the creature comfort?' I then put in two spoonfuls, and he was satisfied. This does not look like an habitual toper. His English acquaintances in Italy were, he said in derision, all milksops. On the rare occasions of any of his former friends visiting him, he would urge them to have a carouse with him, but they had grown wiser. He used to say that little Tommy Moore was the only man he then knew who stuck to the bottle and put him on his mettle, adding, 'But he is a native of the damp isle, where men subsist by suction.'

Byron had not damaged his body by strong drinks,

but his terror of getting fat was so great that he reduced his diet to the point of absolute starvation. He was of that soft, lymphatic temperament which it is almost impossible to keep within a moderate compass, particularly as in his case his lameness prevented his taking exercise. When he added to his weight, even standing was painful, so he resolved to keep down to eleven stone, or shoot himself. He said everything he swallowed was instantly converted into tallow and deposited on his ribs.

He was the only human being I ever met with who had sufficient self-restraint and resolution to resist this proneness to fatten: he did so; and at Genoa, where he was last weighed, he was ten stone and nine pounds, and looked much less. This was not from vanity about his personal appearance, but from a better motive; and as, like Justice Greedy, he was always hungry, his merit was the greater. Occasionally he relaxed his vigilance, when he swelled apace.

I remember one of his old friends saying, 'Byron, how well you are looking!' If he had stopped there it had been well, but when he added, 'You are getting fat,' Byron's brow reddened, and his eyes flashed—'Do you call getting fat looking well, as if I were a hog?' and, turning to me, he muttered, 'The beast, I can hardly keep my hands off him.' The man who thus offended him was the husband of the lady addressed as 'Genevra,' and the original of his 'Zuleika,' in the *Bride of Abydos*. I don't think he had much appetite for his dinner that day, or for many days, and never forgave the man who, so far from wishing to offend, intended to pay him a compliment.

Byron said he had tried all sorts of experiments to stay his hunger, without adding to his bulk. 'I swelled,' he said, 'at one time to fourteen stone,

so I clapped the muzzle on my jaws, and, like the hybernating animals, consumed my own fat.'

He would exist on biscuits and soda-water for days together, then, to allay the eternal hunger gnawing at his vitals, he would make up a horrid mess of cold potatoes, rice, fish, or greens, deluged in vinegar, and gobble it up like a famished dog. On either of these unsavoury dishes, with a biscuit and a glass or two of Rhine wine, he cared not how sour, he called feasting sumptuously. Upon my observing he might as well have fresh fish and vegetables, instead of stale, he laughed and answered,

'I have an advantage over you, I have no palate; one thing is as good as another to me.'

'Nothing,' I said, 'disagrees with the natural man, he fasts and gorges, his nerves and brains don't bother him; but if you wish to live?'——

'Who wants to live?' he replied, 'not I. The Byrons are a short-lived race on both sides, father and mother: longevity is hereditary: I am nearly at the end of my tether. I don't care for death a d—n: it is her sting! I can't bear pain.'

His habits and want of exercise damaged him, not drink. It must be borne in mind, moreover, that his brain was always working at high pressure. The consequences resulting from his way of life were low or intermittent fevers; these last had fastened on him in his early travels in the Levant; and there is this peculiarity in malaria fevers, that if you have once had them, you are ever after peculiarly susceptible to a renewal of their attacks if within their reach, and Byron was hardly ever out of it. Venice and Ravenna are belted in with swamps, and fevers are rife in the autumn. By starving his body Byron kept his brains clear; no man had brighter eyes or a clearer voice; and his resolute bearing and

prompt replies, when excited, gave to his body an appearance of muscular power that imposed on strangers. I never doubted, for he was indifferent to life, and prouder than Lucifer, that if he had drawn his sword in Greece, or elsewhere, he would have thrown away the scabbard.

CHAPTER VII

O thou, who plumed with strong desire
Would'st float above the earth, beware!
A shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
Night is coming!
THE TWO SPIRITS.—*Shelley.*

IN the annals of authors I cannot find one who wrote under so many discouragements as Shelley; for even Bunyan's dungeon walls echoed the cheers of hosts of zealous disciples on the outside, whereas Shelley could number his readers on his fingers. He said, 'I can only print my writings by stinting myself in food!' Published, or sold openly, they were not.

The utter loneliness in which he was condemned to pass the largest portion of his life would have paralysed any brains less subtilised by genius than his were. Yet he was social and cheerful, and, although frugal himself, most liberal to others, while to serve a friend he was ever ready to make any sacrifice. It was, perhaps, fortunate he was known to so few, for those few kept him close shorn. He went to Ravenna in 1821 on Byron's business, and, writing to his wife, makes this comment on the Pilgrim's asking him to execute a delicate commission:—'But it seems destined that I am always to have some active part in the affairs of everybody whom I approach.' And so he had.

Shelley, in his elegy on the death of Keats, gives this picture of himself:

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom amongst men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm,
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.'

Every day I passed some hours with Byron, and very often my evenings with Shelley and Williams, so that when my memory summons one of them to appear, the others are sure to follow in his wake. If Byron's reckless frankness and apparent cordiality warmed your feelings, his sensitiveness, irritability, and the perverseness of his temper, cooled them. I was not then thirty, and the exigences of my now full-blown vanities were unsated, and my credulity unexhausted. I believed in many things then, and believe in some now; I could not sympathise with Byron, who believed in nothing.

'As for love, friendship, and your *entusamusy*,' said he, 'they must run their course. If you are not hanged or drowned before you are forty, you will wonder at all the foolish things they have made you say and do,—as I do now.'

'I will go over to the Shelleys,' I answered, 'and hear their opinions on the subject.'

'Ay, the Snake has fascinated you; I am for making a man of the world of you; they will mould you into a Frankenstein monster: so good-night!'

Goëthe's Mephistopheles calls the serpent that tempted Eve, 'My Aunt—the renowned snake;' and as Shelley translated and repeated passages of

'Faust'—to, as he said, impregnate Byron's brain,—when he came to that passage, 'My Aunt, the renowned snake,' Byron said, 'Then you are her nephew,' and henceforth he often called Shelley, the Snake; his bright eyes, slim figure, and noiseless movements, strengthened, if it did not suggest, the comparison. Byron was the real snake,—a dangerous mischief-maker; his wit or humour might force a grim smile, or hollow laugh, from the standers by, but they savoured more of pain than playfulness, and made you dissatisfied with yourself and him. When I left his gloomy hall, and the echoes of the heavy iron-plated door died away, I could hardly refrain from shouting with joy as I hurried along the broad-flagged terrace which overhangs the pleasant river, cheered on my course by the cloudless sky, soft air, and fading light, which close an Italian day.

After a hasty dinner at my albergo, I hastened along the Arno to the hospitable and cheerful abode of the Shelleys. There I found those sympathies and sentiments which the Pilgrim denounced as illusions believed in as the only realities.

Shelley's mental activity was infectious; he kept your brain in constant action. Its effect on his comrade was very striking. Williams gave up all his accustomed sports for books, and the bettering of his mind; he had excellent natural ability; and the Poet delighted to see the seeds he had sown, germinating. Shelley said he was the sparrow educating the young of the cuckoo. After a protracted labour, Ned was delivered of a five-act play. Shelley was sanguine that his pupil would succeed as a dramatic writer. One morning I was in Mrs. Williams's drawing-room, by appointment, to hear Ned read an act of his drama. I sat with an aspect as caustic

as a critic who was to decide his fate. Whilst thus intent Shelley stood before us with a most woeful expression.

Mrs. Williams started up, exclaiming, 'What's the matter, Percy?'

'Mary has threatened me.'

'Threatened you with what?'

He looked mysterious and too agitated to reply.

Mrs. Williams repeated, 'With what? to box your ears?'

'Oh, much worse than that; Mary says she will have a party; there are English singers here, the Sinclairs, and she will ask them, and everyone she or you know—oh, the horror!'

We all burst into a laugh except his friend Ned.

'It will kill me.'

'Music, kill you!' said Mrs. Williams. 'Why, you have told me, you flatterer, that you loved music.'

'So I do. It's the company terrifies me. For pity go to Mary and intercede for me; I will submit to any other species of torture than that of being bored to death by idle ladies and gentlemen.'

After various devices it was resolved that Ned Williams should wait upon the lady,—he being gifted with a silvery tongue, and sympathising with the Poet in his dislike of fine ladies,—and see what he could do to avert the threatened invasion of the Poet's solitude. Meanwhile, Shelley remained in a state of restless ecstacy; he could not even read or sit. Ned returned with a grave face; the Poet stood as a criminal stands at the bar, whilst the solemn arbitrator of his fate decides it. 'The lady,' commenced Ned, 'has set her heart on having a party, and will not be baulked;' but, seeing the Poet's despair, he added, 'It is to be limited to

those here assembled, and some of Count Gamba's family; and instead of a musical feast—as we have no souls—we are to have a dinner.' The Poet hopped off, rejoicing, making a noise I should have thought whistling, but that he was ignorant of that accomplishment.

I have seen Shelley and Byron in society, and the contrast was as marked as their characters. The former, not thinking of himself, was as much at ease as in his own home, omitting no occasion of obliging those whom he came in contact with, readily conversing with all or any who addressed him, irrespective of age or rank, dress or address. To the first party I went with Byron, as we were on our road, he said,

'It 's so long since I have been in English society, you must tell me what are their present customs. Does rank lead the way, or does the ambassadress pair us off into the dining-room? Do they ask people to wine? Do we exit with the women, or stick to our claret?'

On arriving, he was flushed, fussy, embarrassed, over ceremonious, and ill at ease, evidently thinking a great deal of himself and very little of others. He had learnt his manners, as I have said, during the Regency, when society was more exclusive than even now, and consequently more vulgar.

To know an author, personally, is too often but to destroy the illusion created by his works; if you withdraw the veil of your idol's sanctuary, and see him in his night-cap, you discover a querulous old crone, a sour pedant, a supercilious coxcomb, a servile tuft-hunter, a saucy snob, or, at best, an ordinary mortal. Instead of the high-minded seeker after truth and abstract knowledge, with a nature too refined to bear the vulgarities of life, as we had

imagined, we find him full of egotism and vanity, and eternally fretting and fuming about trifles. As a general rule, therefore, it is wise to avoid writers whose works amuse or delight you, for when you see them they will delight you no more. Shelley was a grand exception to this rule. To form a just idea of his poetry, you should have witnessed his daily life; his words and actions best illustrated his writings. If his glorious conception of Gods and men constituted an atheist, I am afraid all that listened were little better. Sometimes he would run through a great work on science, condense the author's laboured exposition, and by substituting simple words for the jargon of the schools, make the most abstruse subject transparent. The cynic Byron acknowledged him to be the best and ablest man he had ever known. The truth was, Shelley loved everything better than himself. Self-preservation is, they say, the first law of nature, with him it was the last; and the only pain he ever gave his friends arose from the utter indifference with which he treated everything concerning himself. I was bathing one day in a deep pool in the Arno, and astonished the Poet by performing a series of aquatic gymnastics, which I had learnt from the natives of the South Seas. On my coming out, whilst dressing, Shelley said, mournfully,

'Why can't I swim, it seems so very easy?'

I answered, 'Because you think you can't. If you determine, you will; take a header off this bank, and when you rise turn on your back, you will float like a duck; but you must reverse the arch in your spine, for it's now bent the wrong way.'

He doffed his jacket and trowsers, kicked off his shoes and socks, and plunged in, and there he lay stretched out on the bottom like a conger eel, not

making the least effort or struggle to save himself. He would have been drowned if I had not instantly fished him out. When he recovered his breath, he said:

'I always find the bottom of the well, and they say Truth lies there. In another minute I should have found it, and you would have found an empty shell. It is an easy way of getting rid of the body.'

'What would Mrs. Shelley have said to me if I had gone back with your empty cage?'

'Don't tell Mary—not a word!' he rejoined, and then continued, 'It 's a great temptation; in another minute I might have been in another planet.'

'But as you always find the bottom,' I observed, 'you might have sunk "deeper than did ever plummet sound."'

'I am quite easy on that subject,' said the Bard. 'Death is the veil, which those who live call life: they sleep, and it is lifted. Intelligence should be imperishable; the art of printing has made it so in this planet.'

'Do you believe in the immortality of the spirit?'

He continued, 'Certainly not; how can I? We know nothing; we have no evidence; we cannot express our inmost thoughts. They are incomprehensible even to ourselves.'

'Why,' I asked, 'do you call yourself an atheist? it annihilates you in this world.'

'It is a word of abuse to stop discussion, a painted devil to frighten the foolish, a threat to intimidate the wise and good. I used it to express my abhorrence of superstition; I took up the word, as a knight took up a gauntlet, in defiance of injustice. The delusions of Christianity are fatal to genius and originality: they limit thought.'

Shelley's thirst for knowledge was unquenchable.

He set to work on a book, or a pyramid of books; his eyes glistening with an energy as fierce as that of the most sordid gold-digger who works at a rock of quartz, crushing his way through all impediments, no grain of the pure ore escaping his eager scrutiny. I called on him one morning at ten, he was in his study with a German folio open, resting on the broad marble mantel-piece, over an old-fashioned fire-place, and with a dictionary in his hand. He always read standing if possible. He had promised over night to go with me, but now begged me to let him off. I then rode to Leghorn, eleven or twelve miles distant, and passed the day there; on returning at six in the evening to dine with Mrs. Shelley and the Williams's, as I had engaged to do, I went into the Poet's room and found him exactly in the position in which I had left him in the morning, but looking pale and exhausted.

'Well,' I said, 'have you found it?'

Shutting the book and going to the window, he replied, 'No, I have lost it:' with a deep sigh: 'I have lost a day.'

'Cheer up, my lad, and come to dinner.'

Putting his long fingers through his masses of wild tangled hair, he answered faintly, 'You go, I have dined—late eating don't do for me.'

'What is this?' I asked as I was going out of the room, pointing to one of his bookshelves with a plate containing bread and cold meat on it.

'That,' — colouring, — 'why that must be my dinner. It's very foolish; I thought I had eaten it.'

Saying I was determined that he should for once have a regular meal, I lugged him into the dining-room, but he brought a book with him and read more than he ate. He seldom ate at stated periods, but only when hungry—and then like the birds, if

he saw something edible lying about,—but the cupboards of literary ladies are like Mother Hubbard's, bare. His drink was water, or tea if he could get it, bread was literally his staff of life; other things he thought superfluous. An Italian who knew his way of life, not believing it possible that any human being would live as Shelley did, unless compelled by poverty, was astonished when he was told the amount of his income, and thought he was defrauded or grossly ignorant of the value of money. He, therefore, made a proposition which much amused the Poet, that he, the friendly Italian, would undertake for ten thousand crowns a year to keep Shelley like a grand Seigneur, to provide his table with luxuries, his house with attendants, a carriage and opera box for my lady, besides adorning his person after the most approved Parisian style. Mrs. Shelley's toilette was not included in the wily Italian's estimates. The fact was, Shelley stinted himself to bare necessaries, and then often lavished the money, saved by unprecedented self-denial, on selfish fellows who denied themselves nothing; such as the great philosopher had in his eye, when he said, 'It is the nature of extreme self-lovers, as they will set a house on fire, an' it were only to roast their own eggs.'

Byron on our voyage to Greece, talking of England, after commenting on his own wrongs, said, 'And Shelley, too, the best and most benevolent of men; they hooted him out of his country like a mad dog, for questioning a dogma. Man is the same rancorous beast now that he was from the beginning, and if the Christ they profess to worship re-appeared, they would again crucify him.'

CHAPTER VIII

Where the pine its garland weaves
Of sapless green and ivy dun,
Round stems that never kiss the sun,
Where the lawns and pastures be
And the sand-hills of the sea.
The Invitation.—SHELLEY.

BYRON's literary was, like Alexander's military career, one great triumph; but whilst he was at the zenith of his popularity, he railed against the world's injustice. Was this insanity, or what polite doctors now call a softening of the brain? I suppose, by the 'world' he meant no more than the fashionable set he had seen squeezed together in a drawing-room, and by all the press that attacked him—the fraction of it which took its tone from some small but active clique: as to friends deserting him, that could not be, for it was his boast that he never had attempted to make any after his school hallucinations. But in the pride of his strength, and the audacity of his youth, enemies he certainly did make, and when they saw an opportunity of getting rid of a supercilious rival, they instinctively took advantage of it. As to the Poet's differences with his wife, they must have appeared absurd to men who were as indifferent to their own wives as were the majority of Byron's enemies.

When the most worldly wise and unimpassioned marry, they take a leap in the dark, and can no more foresee the consequences than poets,—owls blinded by the light of their vain imaginations.

The worldly wise, not having risked or anticipated much, stand to their bargain 'for better or worse,' and say nothing about it; but the irascible tribe of songsters, when they find that marriage is not exactly what they imagined it to be, 'proclaim their griefs from the house-top,' as Byron did.

Very pretty books have been written on the 'Loves of the Angels,' and 'Loves of the Poets,' and Love universal—but when lovers are paired and caged together in holy matrimony, the curtain is dropped, and we hear no more of them. It may be, they moult their feathers and lose their song. Byron's marriage must not be classed with those of the Poets, but of the worldly wise; he was not under the illusion of love, but of money. If he had left his wife and cut society (the last he was resolved on doing), he would have been content: that his wife and society should have cast him off, was a mortification his pride could never forgive nor forget. As to the oft-vexed question of the Poet's separation from his wife, he has told the facts in prose and verse; but omitted to state, that he treated women as things devoid of soul or sense; he would not eat, pray, walk, nor talk with them. If he had told us this, who would have marvelled that a lady, tenderly reared and richly endowed, pious, learned and prudent, deluded into marrying such a man, should have thought him mad or worse, and sought safety by flight. Within certain degrees of affinity marriages are forbidden; so they should be where there is no natural affinity of feelings, habits, tastes, or sympathies. It is very kind in the saints to ally themselves to sinners, but in ninety-nine cases out of one hundred, it turns out a failure; in Byron's case, it was signally so.

In all the transactions of his life, his intense

anxiety to cut a good figure made him cruelly unjust to others. In fact, his pride and vanity mastered him, and he made no effort to conceal or to control their dominion, reckless how it marred his worldly advantages. Amidst the general homage paid to his genius, his vanity reverted to his early disappointments, when he was baffled and compelled to fly, and though Parthian-like he discharged his arrows on his pursuers, he lost the battle.

Shelley had a far loftier spirit. His pride was spiritual. When attacked, he neither fled nor stood at bay, nor altered his course, but calmly went on with heart and mind intent on elevating his species. Whilst men tried to force him down to their level, he toiled to draw their minds upwards. His words were, 'I always go on until I am stopped, and I never am stopped.' Like the Indian palms, Shelley never flourished far from water. When compelled to take up his quarters in a town, he every morning with the instinct that guides the water-birds, fled to the nearest lake, river, or sea-shore, and only returned to roost at night. If debarred from this, he sought out the most solitary places. Towns and crowds distracted him. Even the silent and half-deserted cities of Italy, with their temples, palaces, paintings and sculpture, could not make him stay, if there was a wood or water within his reach. At Pisa, he had a river under his window, and a Pine forest in the neighbourhood.

I accompanied Mrs. Shelley to this wood in search of the Poet, on one of those brilliant spring mornings we on the wrong side of the Alps are so rarely blessed with. A calêche took us out of Pisa through the gate of the Cascine; we drove through the Cascine and onwards for two or three miles, traversing the vineyards and farms, on the Grand Ducal estate.

On approaching some farm buildings, near which were a hunting-palace and chapel, we dismissed the carriage, directing the driver to meet us at a certain spot in the afternoon. We then walked on, not exactly knowing what course to take, and were exceedingly perplexed on coming to an open space, from which four roads radiated. There we stopped until I learnt from a Contadino, that the one before us led directly to the sea, which was two or three miles distant, the one on the right, led to the Serchio, and that on the left, to the Arno: we decided on taking the road to the sea. We proceeded on our journey over a sandy plain; the sun being near its zenith. Walking was not included among the number of accomplishments in which Mrs. Shelley excelled; the loose sand and hot sun soon knocked her up. When we got under the cool canopy of the pines, she stopped and allowed me to hunt for her husband. I now strode along; the forest was on my right hand and extensive pastures on my left, with herds of oxen, camels, and horses grazing thereon. I came upon the open sea at a place called Gombo, from whence I could see Via Reggio, the Gulf of Spezzia, and the mountains beyond. After bathing, seeing nothing of the Poet, I penetrated the densest part of the forest, ever and anon making the woods ring with the name of Shelley, and scaring the herons and water-birds from the chain of stagnant pools which impeded my progress.

With no landmarks to guide me, nor sky to be seen above, I was bewildered in this wilderness of pines and ponds; so I sat down, struck a light, and smoked a cigar. A red man would have known his course by the trees themselves, their growth, form, and colour; or if a footstep had passed that day, he would have hit upon its trail. As I mused upon his

sagacity and my own stupidity, the braying of a brother jackass startled me. He was followed by an old man picking up pine cones. I asked him if he had seen a stranger?

'L'Inglese malincolico haunts the wood maledetta. I will show you his nest.'

As we advanced, the ground swelled into mounds and hollows. By-and-by the old fellow pointed with his stick to a hat, books, and loose papers lying about, and then to a deep pool of dark glimmering water, saying 'Eccolo!' I thought he meant that Shelley was in or under the water. The careless, not to say impatient, way in which the Poet bore his burden of life, caused a vague dread amongst his family and friends that he might lose or cast it away at any moment.

The strong light streamed through the opening of the trees. One of the pines, undermined by the water, had fallen into it. Under its lee, and nearly hidden, sat the Poet, gazing on the dark mirror beneath, so lost in his bardish reverie that he did not hear my approach. There the trees were stunted and bent, and their crowns were shorn like friars by the sea breezes, excepting a cluster of three, under which Shelley's traps were lying; these overtopped the rest. To avoid startling the Poet out of his dream, I squatted under the lofty trees, and opened his books. One was a volume of his favourite Greek dramatist, Sophocles,—the same that I found in his pocket after his death—and the other was a volume of Shakespeare. I then hailed him, and, turning his head, he answered faintly:

'Hollo, come in.'

'Is this your study?' I asked.

'Yes,' he answered, 'and these trees are my books —they tell no lies. You are sitting on the stool of

inspiration,' he exclaimed. 'In those three pines the weird sisters are imprisoned, and this,' pointing to the water, 'is their cauldron of black broth. The Pythian priestesses uttered their oracles from below —now they are muttered from above. Listen to the solemn music in the pine-tops—don't you hear the mournful murmurings of the sea? Sometimes they rave and roar, shriek and howl, like a rabble of priests. In a tempest, when a ship sinks, they catch the despairing groans of the drowning mariners. Their chorus is the eternal wailing of wretched men.'

'They, like the world,' I observed, 'seem to take no note of wretched women. The sighs and wailing you talk about are not those of wretched men afar off, but are breathed by a woman near at hand—not from the pine-tops, but by a forsaken lady.'

'What do you mean?' he asked.

'Why, that an hour or two ago I left your wife, Mary Shelley, at the entrance of this grove, in despair at not finding you.'

He started up, snatched up his scattered books and papers, thrust them into his hat and jacket pockets, sighing 'Poor Mary! her's is a sad fate. Come along; she can't bear solitude, nor I society—the quick coupled with the dead.'

He glided along with his usual swiftness, for nothing could make him pause for an instant when he had an object in view, until he had attained it. On hearing our voices, Mrs. Shelley joined us; her clear gray eyes and thoughtful brow expressing the love she could not speak. To stop Shelley's self-reproaches, or to hide her own emotions, she began in a bantering tone, chiding and coaxing him:

'What a wild-goose you are, Percy; if my thoughts have strayed from my book, it was to the opera, and

my new dress from Florence—and especially the ivy wreath so much admired for my hair, and not to you, you silly fellow! When I left home, my satin slippers had not arrived. These are serious matters to gentlewomen, enough to ruffle the serenest tempered. As to you and your ungallant companion, I had forgotten that such things are; but as it is the ridiculous custom to have men at balls and operas, I must take you with me, though, from your uncouth ways, you will be taken for Valentine and he for Orson.'

Shelley, like other students, would, when the spell that bound his faculties was broken, shut his books, and indulge in the wildest flights of mirth and folly. As this is a sport all can join in, we talked and laughed, and shrieked, and shouted, as we emerged from under the shadows of the melancholy pines and their nodding plumes, into the now cool purple twilight and open country. The cheerful and graceful peasant girls, returning home from the vineyards and olive groves, stopped to look at us. The old man I had met in the morning gathering pine cones, passed hurriedly by with his donkey, giving Shelley a wide berth, and evidently thinking that the melancholy Englishman had now become a raving maniac. Sancho says, 'Blessings on the man who invented sleep;' the man who invented laughing deserves no less.

The day I found Shelley in the pine forest he was writing verses on a guitar. I picked up a fragment, but could only make out the first two lines:—

Ariel, to Miranda take
This slave of music.

It was a frightful scrawl; words smeared out with his finger, and one upon the other, over and over in tiers, and all run together in most 'admired disorder;'

it might have been taken for a sketch of a marsh overgrown with bulrushes, and the blots for wild ducks; such a dashed off daub as self-conceited artists mistake for a manifestation of genius. On my observing this to him, he answered,

'When my brain gets heated with thought, it soon boils, and throws off images and words faster than I can skim them off. In the morning, when cooled down, out of the rude sketch as you justly call it, I shall attempt a drawing. If you ask me why I publish what few or none will care to read, it is that the spirits I have raised haunt me until they are sent to the devil of a printer. All authors are anxious to breech their bantlings.'

CHAPTER IX

> So as we rode, we talked; the swift thought,
> Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,
> But flew from brain to brain.
>
> SHELLEY.

ONE day I drove the poet to Leghorn. In answer to my questions, Shelley said, 'In writing the Cenci my object was to see how I could succeed in describing passions I have never felt, and to tell the most dreadful story in pure and refined language. The image of Beatrice haunted me after seeing her portrait. The story is well authenticated, and the details far more horrible than I have painted them. The Cenci is a work of art; it is not coloured by my feelings, nor obscured by my metaphysics. I don't think much of it. It gave me less trouble than anything I have written of the same length.

'I am now writing a play for the stage. It is affectation to say we write a play for any other purpose. The subject is from English history; in style and manner I shall approach as near our great dramatist as my feeble powers will permit. King Lear is my model, for that is nearly perfect. I am amazed at my presumption. Poets should be modest. My audacity savours of madness.

'Considering the labour requisite to excel in composition, I think it would be better to stick to one style. The clamour for novelty is leading us all astray. Yet, at Ravenna, I urged Byron to come out of the dismal 'wood of error' into the sun, to

write something new and cheerful. Don Juan is the result. The poetry is superior to Childe Harold, and the plan, or rather want of plan, gives scope to his astonishing natural powers.

'My friends say my Prometheus is too wild, ideal, and perplexed with imagery. It may be so. It has no resemblance to the Greek drama. It is original; and cost me severe mental labour. Authors, like mothers, prefer the children who have given them most trouble. Milton preferred his Paradise Regained, Petrarch his Africa, and Byron his Doge of Venice.

'I have the vanity to write only for poetical minds, and must be satisfied with few readers. Byron is ambitious; he writes for all, and all read his works.

'With regard to the great question, the System of the Universe, I have no curiosity on the subject. I am content to see no farther into futurity than Plato and Bacon. My mind is tranquil; I have no fears and some hopes. In our present gross material state our faculties are clouded;—when Death removes our clay coverings the mystery will be solved.'

He thought a play founded on Shakespeare's 'Timon' would be an excellent mode of discussing our present social and political evils dramatically, and of descanting on them.

After we had done our business, I called on a Scotch family and lured my companion in. He abhorred forcing himself on strangers—so I did not mention his name, merely observing,

'As you said you wanted information about Italy, here is a friend of mine can give it you—for I cannot.'

The ladies—for there was no man there—were capital specimens of Scotchwomen, fresh from the land of cakes,—frank, fair, intelligent, and of course, pious. After a long and earnest talk we left them,

but not without difficulty, so pressing were they for us to stop to dinner.

When I next visited them, they were disappointed at the absence of my companion; and when I told them it was Shelley, the young and handsome mother clasped her hands, and exclaimed,

'Shelley! That bright-eyed youth;—so gentle, so intelligent—so thoughtful for us. Oh, why did you not name him?'

'Because he thought you would have been shocked.'

'Shocked!—why, I would have knelt to him in penitence for having wronged him even in my thoughts. If he is not pure and good—then there is no truth and goodness in this world. His looks reminded me of my own blessed baby,—so innocent —so full of love and sweetness.'

'So is the serpent that tempted Eve described,' I said.

'Oh, you wicked scoffer!' she continued, 'But I know you love him. I shall have no peace of mind until you bring him here. You remember, sister, I said his young face had lines of care and sorrow on it—when he was showing us the road to Rome on the map and the sun shone on it;—poor boy! Oh, tell us about his wife,—is she worthy of him? She must love him dearly—and so must all who know him.'

To palliate the warm-hearted lady's admiration of the Poet—as well as my own—I must observe, that all on knowing him sang the same song; and as I have before observed, even Byron in his most moody and cynical vein, joined in the chorus, echoing my monotonous notes. The reason was, that after having heard or read the rancorous abuse heaped on Shelley by the mercenary literature of the day,—in which he was described as a monster more hideous than Caliban,

—the revulsion of feeling on seeing the man was so great, that he seemed as gentle a spirit as Ariel. There never has been nor can be any true likeness of him. Desdemona says, 'I saw Othello's visage in his mind,' and Shelley's 'visage' as well as his mind are to be seen in his works.

When I was at Leghorn with Shelley, I drew him towards the docks, saying,

'As we have a spare hour let's see if we can't put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. In these docks are living specimens of all the nationalities of the world; thus we can go round it, and visit and examine any particular nation we like, observing their peculiar habits, manners, dress, language, food, productions, arts, and naval architecture; for see how varied are the shapes, build, rigging, and decoration of the different vessels. There lies an English cutter, a French chasse marée, an American clipper, a Spanish tartan, an Austrian trabacolo, a Genoese felucca, a Sardinian zebeck, a Neapolitan brig, a Sicilian sparanza, a Dutch galleot, a Danish snow, a Russian hermaphrodite, a Turkish sackalever, a Greek bombard. I don't see a Persian Dow, an Arab grab, or a Chinese junk; but there are enough for our purpose and to spare. As you are writing a poem, "Hellas," about the modern Greeks, would it not be as well to take a look at them amidst all the din of the docks? I hear their shrill nasal voices, and should like to know if you can trace in the language or lineaments of these Greeks of the nineteenth century, A.D., the faintest resemblance to the lofty and sublime spirits who lived in the fourth century B.C. An English merchant who has dealings with them, told me he thought these modern Greeks were, if judged by their actions, a cross between the Jews and gypsies;—but here comes the Capitano Zarita; I know him.'

So dragging Shelley with me I introduced him, and asking to see the vessel, we crossed the plank from the quay and stood on the deck of the San Spiridione in the midst of her chattering irascible crew. They took little heed of the skipper, for in these trading vessels each individual of the crew is part owner, and has some share in the cargo; so they are all interested in the speculation—having no wages. They squatted about the decks in small knots, shrieking, gesticulating, smoking, eating, and gambling like savages.

'Does this realise your idea of Hellenism, Shelley?' I said.

'No! but it does of Hell,' he replied.

The captain insisted on giving us pipes and coffee in his cabin, so I dragged Shelley down. Over the rudder-head facing us, there was a gilt box enshrining a flaming gaudy daub of a saint, with a lamp burning before it; this was Il Padre Santo Spiridione, the ship's godfather. The skipper crossed himself and squatted on the dirty divan. Shelley talked to him about the Greek revolution that was taking place, but from its interrupting trade the captain was opposed to it.

'Come away!' said Shelley. 'There is not a drop of the old Hellenic blood here. These are not the men to rekindle the ancient Greek fire; their souls are extinguished by traffic and superstition. Come away!'—and away we went.

'It is but a step,' I said, 'from these ruins of worn-out Greece to the New World, let's board the American clipper.'

'I had rather not have any more of my hopes and illusions mocked by sad realities,' said Shelley.

'You must allow,' I answered, 'that graceful craft was designed by a man who had a poet's feeling for

things beautiful; let's get a model and build a boat like her.'

The idea so pleased the Poet that he followed me on board her. The Americans are a social, free-and-easy people, accustomed to take their own way, and to readily yield the same privilege to all others, so that our coming on board, and examination of the vessel, fore and aft, were not considered as intrusion. The captain was on shore, so I talked to the mate, a smart specimen of a Yankee. When I commended her beauty, he said,

'I do expect, now we have our new copper on, she has a look of the brass sarpent, she has as slick a run, and her bearings are just where they should be.'

I said we wished to build a boat after her model.

'Then I calculate you must go to Baltimore or Boston to get one; there is no one on this side the water can do the job. We have our freight all ready, and are homeward-bound; we have elegant accommodation, and you will be across before your young friend's beard is ripe for a razor. Come down, and take an observation of the state cabin.'

It was about seven and a-half feet by five; 'plenty of room to live or die comfortably in,' he observed, and then pressed us to have a chaw of real old Virginian cake, i. e. tobacco, and a cool drink of peach brandy. I made some observation to him about the Greek vessel we had visited.

'Crank as an eggshell,' he said; 'too many sticks and top hamper, she looks like a bundle of chips going to hell to be burnt.'

I seduced Shelley into drinking a wine-glass of weak grog, the first and last he ever drank. The Yankee would not let us go until we had drunk, under the star-spangled banner, to the memory of

Washington, and the prosperity of the American commonwealth.

'As a warrior and statesman,' said Shelley, 'he was righteous in all he did, unlike all who lived before or since; he never used his power but for the benefit of his fellow-creatures,

> He fought,
> For truth and wisdom, foremost of the brave;
> Him glory's idle glances dazzled not;
> 'Twas his ambition, generous and great,
> A life to life's great end to consecrate.'

'Stranger,' said the Yankee, 'truer words were never spoken; there is dry rot in all the main timbers of the Old World, and none of you will do any good till you are docked, refitted, and annexed to the New. You must log that song you sang; there ain't many Britishers that will say as much of the man that whipped them; so just set these lines down in the log, or it won't go for nothing.'

Shelley wrote some verses in the book, but not those he had quoted; and so we parted.

It was now time to return to Pisa. I never lost an opportunity of thus giving the dreamy bard glimpses of rough life. He disliked it, but could not resist my importunity. He had seen no more of the working-day world than a girl at a boarding-school, and his habit of eternally brooding on his own thoughts, in solitude and silence, damaged his health of mind and body. Like many other over-sensitive people, he thought everybody shunned him, whereas it was he who stood aloof. To the few who sought his acquaintance, he was frank, cordial, and, if they appeared worthy, friendly in the extreme; but he shrank like a maiden from making the first advances. At the beginning of his literary life, he believed all authors

published their opinions as he did his from a deep conviction of their truth and importance, after due investigation. When a new work appeared, on any subject that interested him, he would write to the authors expressing his opinion of their books, and giving his reasons for his judgment, always arguing logically, and not for display; and, with his serene and imperturbable temper, variety of knowledge, tenacious memory, command of language, or rather of all the languages of literature, he was a most subtle critic; but, as authors are not the meekest or mildest of men, he occasionally met with rude rebuffs, and retired into his own shell.

In this way he became acquainted with Godwin, in early life; and in his first work, 'Queen Mab,' or rather in the notes appended to that poem, the old philosopher's influence on the beardless boy is strongly marked. For publishing these notes Shelley was punished as the man is stated to have been who committed the first murder: 'every man's hand was against him.' Southey, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and others he had either written to, corresponded with, or personally known; but in their literary guild he found little sympathy; their enthusiasm had burnt out whilst Shelley's had waxed stronger. Old Rothschild's sage maxim perhaps influenced them, 'Never connect yourself with an unlucky man.' However that may be, all intercourse had long ceased between Shelley and any of the literary fraternity of the day, with the exception of Peacock, Keats, Leigh Hunt, and the Brothers Smith, of the 'Rejected Addresses.'

I will now return to our drive home from visiting the ships in the docks of Leghorn. Shelley was in high glee, and full of fun, as he generally was after these 'distractions,' as he called them. The fact was

his excessive mental labour impeded, if it did not paralyse, his bodily functions. When his mind was fixed on a subject, his mental powers were strained to the utmost. If not writing or sleeping, he was reading; he read, whilst eating, walking, or travelling—the last thing at night, and the first thing in the morning—not the ephemeral literature of the day, which requires little or no thought, but the works, of the old sages, metaphysicians, logicians, and philosophers, of the Grecian and Roman poets, and of modern scientific men, so that anything that could diversify or relax his overstrained brain was of the utmost benefit to him. Now he talked of nothing but ships, sailors, and the sea; and, although he agreed with Johnson that a man who made a pun would pick a pocket, yet he made several in Greek, which he at least thought good, for he shrieked with laughter as he uttered them. Fearing his phil-Hellenism would end by making him serious, as it always did, I brought his mind back by repeating some lines of Sedley's, beginning

> Love still has something of the sea
> From whence his mother rose.

During the rest of our drive we had nothing but sea yarns. He regretted having wasted his life in Greek and Latin, instead of learning the useful arts of swimming and sailoring. He resolved to have a good-sized boat forthwith. I proposed we should form a colony at the Gulf of Spezzia, and I said—'You get Byron to join us, and with your family and the Williams', and books, horses, and boats, undisturbed by the botherations of the world, we shall have all that reasonable people require.'

This scheme enchanted him. 'Well,' I said, 'propose this to Byron to-morrow.'

'No!' he answered, 'you must do that. Byron is always influenced by his last acquaintance. You are the last man, so do you pop the question.'

'I understand that feeling,' I observed. 'When well known neither men nor women realise our first conception of them, so we transfer our hopes to the new men or women who make a sign of sympathy, only to find them like those who have gone before, or worse.' I quoted his own lines as exemplifying my meaning—

Where is the beauty, love, and truth we seek,
But in our minds!

VILLA MAGNI, SHELLEY'S RESIDENCE ON THE GULF OF SPEZZIA, A. D. 1822, WITH THE BOAT (THE DON JUAN) IN WHICH HE WAS WRECKED

CHAPTER X

First our pleasures die—and then
Our hopes, and then our fears—and when
These are dead, the debt is due,
Dust claims dust—and we die too.

SHELLEY.

THE following morning I told Byron our plan. Without any suggestion from me he eagerly volunteered to join us, and asked me to get a yacht built for him, and to look out for a house as near the sea as possible. I allowed some days to pass before I took any steps in order to see if his wayward mind would change. As he grew more urgent I wrote to an old naval friend, Captain Roberts, then staying at Genoa, a man peculiarly fitted to execute the order, and requested him to send plans and estimates of an open boat for Shelley, and a large decked one for Byron. Shortly after, Williams and I rode along the coast to the Gulf of Spezzia. Shelley had no pride or vanity to provide for, yet we had the greatest difficulty in finding any house in which the humblest civilised family could exist.

On the shores of this superb bay, only surpassed in its natural beauty and capability by that of Naples, so effectually has tyranny paralysed the energies and enterprise of man, that the only indication of human habitation was a few most miserable fishing villages scattered along the margin of the bay. Near its centre, between the villages of Sant'Arenzo and Lerici, we came upon a lonely and abandoned building called the Villa Magni, though it looked more like a boat-

or bathing-house than a place to live in. It consisted of a terrace or ground-floor unpaved, and used for storing boat-gear and fishing-tackle, and of a single storey over it divided into a hall or saloon and four small rooms which had once been whitewashed; there was one chimney for cooking. This place we thought the Shelleys might put up with for the summer. The only good thing about it was a verandah facing the sea, and almost over it. So we sought the owner and made arrangements, dependent on Shelley's approval, for taking it for six months. As to finding a palazzo grand enough for a Milordo Inglese, within a reasonable distance of the bay, it was out of the question.

Williams returned to Pisa; I rode on to Genoa, and settled with Captain Roberts about building the boats. He had already, with his usual activity, obtained permission to build them in the government dock-yards, and had his plans and estimates made out. I need hardly say that though the Captain was a great arithmetician, this estimate, like all the estimates as to time and cost that were ever made, was a mere delusion, which made Byron wroth, but did not ruffle Shelley's serenity.

On returning to Pisa I found the two Poets going through the same routine of habits they had adopted before my departure; the one getting out of bed after noon, dawdling about until two or three, following the same road on horseback, stopping at the same Podere, firing his pop-guns, and retracing his steps at the same slow pace;—his frugal dinner followed by his accustomed visit to an Italian family, and then—the midnight lamp, and the immortal verses.

The other was up at six or seven, reading Plato, Sophocles, or Spinoza, with the accompaniment of a hunch of dry bread; then he joined Williams in a sail on the Arno, in a flat-bottomed skiff, book in hand,

and from thence he went to the pine-forest, or some out-of-the-way place. When the birds went to roost he returned home, and talked and read until midnight. The monotony of this life was only broken at long intervals by the arrival of some old acquaintances of Byron's: Rogers, Hobhouse, Moore, Scott—not Sir Walter,—and these visits were brief. John Murray, the publisher, sent out new books, and wrote amusing gossiping letters, as did Tom Moore and others. These we were generally allowed to read, or hear read, Byron archly observing, 'My private and confidential letters are better known than any of my published works.'

Shelley's boyish eagerness to possess the new toy, from which he anticipated never-failing pleasure in gliding over the azure seas, under the cloudless skies of an Italian summer, was pleasant to behold. His comrade Williams was inspired by the same spirit. We used to draw plans on the sands of the Arno of the exact dimensions of the boat, dividing her into compartments (the forepart was decked for stowage), and then, squatting down within the lines, I marked off the imaginary cabin. With a real chart of the Mediterranean spread out before them, and with faces as grave and anxious as those of Columbus and his companions, they held councils as to the islands to be visited, coasts explored, courses steered, the amount of armament, stores, water and provisions which would be necessary. Then we would narrate instances of the daring of the old navigators, as when Diaz discovered the Cape of Good Hope in 1446, with two vessels each of fifty tons burthen; or when Drake went round the world, one of his craft being only thirty tons; and of the extraordinary runs and enterprises accomplished in open boats of equal or less tonnage, than the one we were building from the

earliest times to those of Commodore Bligh. Byron with the smile of a Mephistophiles standing by, asked me the amount of salvage we, the salvors, should be entitled to in the probable event of our picking up and towing Shelley's water-logged craft into port.

As the world spun round, the sandy plains of Pisa became too hot to be agreeable, and the Shelleys, longing for the sea breezes, departed to their new abode. Byron could not muster energy enough to break through his dawdling habits, so he lingered on under the fair plea of seeing the Leigh Hunts settled in his ground-floor, which was prepared for them. I rode on to Genoa to hasten the completion and despatch of the long-promised boat-flotilla. I found Captain Roberts had nearly finished Shelley's boat. Williams had brought with him, on leaving England, the section of a boat as a model to build from, designed by a naval officer, and the two friends had so often sat contemplating this toy, believing it to be a marvel of nautical architecture, that nothing would satisfy them but that their craft should be built exactly on the same lines. Roberts, and the builder at Genoa, not approving, protested against it. You might as well have attempted to persuade a young man after a season of boating, or hunting, that he was not a thorough seaman and sportsman; or a youngster flushed with honours from a university that he was not the wisest of men. Williams was on ordinary occasions as humble-minded as Shelley, but having been two or three years in the navy, and then in the cavalry, he thought there was no vanity in his believing that he was as good a judge of a boat or horse as any man. In these small conceits we are all fools at the beginning of life, until time, with his sledge hammer, has let the daylight into our brain-boxes; so the boat was built according to his cherished

model. When it was finished, it took two tons of iron ballast to bring her down to her bearings, and then she was very crank in a breeze, though not deficient in beam. She was fast, strongly built, and Torbay rigged. I despatched her under charge of two steady seamen, and a smart sailor lad, aged eighteen, named Charles Vivian. Shelley sent back the two sailors and only retained the boy; they told me on their return to Genoa, that they had been out in a rough night, that she was a ticklish boat to manage, but had sailed and worked well, and with two good seamen she would do very well; and that they had cautioned the gents accordingly. I shortly after received the following letter from Shelley:

Lerici, *May* 16, 1822.

My dear Trelawny,

The *Don Juan* is arrived, and nothing can exceed the admiration she has excited; for we must suppose the name to have been given her during the equivocation of sex which her godfather suffered in the harem. Williams declares her to be perfect, and I participate in his enthusiasm, inasmuch as would be decent in a landsman. We have been out now several days, although we have sought in vain for an opportunity of trying her against the feluccas or other large craft in the bay; she passes the small ones as a comet might pass the dullest planet of the heavens. When do you expect to be here in the *Bolivar*. If Roberts's 50*l.* grow into a 500*l.*, and his ten days into months, I suppose I may expect that I am considerably in your debt, and that you will not be round here until the middle of the summer. I hope that I shall be mistaken in the last of these conclusions; as to the former, whatever

may be the result, I have little reason and less inclination to complain of my bargain. I wish you could express from me to Roberts, how excessively I am obliged to him for the time and trouble he has expended for my advantage, and which I wish could be as easily repaid as the money which I owe him, and which I wait your orders for remitting.

I have only heard from Lord Byron once, and solely upon that subject. Tita is with me, and I suppose will go with you in the schooner to Leghorn. We are very impatient to see you, and although we cannot hope that you will stay long on your *first* visit, we count upon you for the latter part of the summer, as soon as the novelty of Leghorn is blunted. Mary desires her best regards to you, and unites with me in a sincere wish to renew an intimacy from which we have already experienced so much pleasure.

Believe me, my dear Trelawny,
Your very sincere friend,
P. B. Shelley.

Lerici, *June* 18, 1822.

My dear Trelawny,

I have written to Guelhard, to pay you 154 Tuscan crowns, the amount of the balance against me according to Roberts's calculation, which I keep for your satisfaction, deducting sixty, which I paid the aubergiste at Pisa, in all 214. We saw you about eight miles in the offing this morning; but the abatement of the breeze leaves us little hope that you can have made Leghorn this evening. Pray write us a full, true, and particular account of your proceedings, &c.—How Lord Byron likes the vessel; what are your arrangements and intentions for the summer; and when we may expect to see you or him

in this region again; and especially whether there is any news of Hunt.

Roberts and Williams are very busy in refitting the *Don Juan*; they seem determined that she shall enter Leghorn in style. I am no great judge of these matters; but am excessively obliged to the former, and delighted that the latter should find amusement, like the sparrow, in educating the cuckoo's young.

You, of course, enter into society at Leghorn: should you meet with any scientific person, capable of preparing the *Prussic Acid, or essential oil of bitter almonds*, I should regard it as a great kindness if you could procure me a small quantity. It requires the greatest caution in preparation, and ought to be highly concentrated; I would give any price for this medicine; you remember we talked of it the other night, and we both expressed a wish to possess it; my wish was serious, and sprung from the desire of avoiding needless suffering. I need not tell you I have no intention of suicide at present, but I confess it would be a comfort to me to hold in my possession that golden key to the chamber of perpetual rest. *The Prussic Acid* is used in medicine in infinitely minute doses; but that preparation is weak, and has not the concentration necessary to medicine all ills infallibly. A single drop, even less, is a dose, and it acts by paralysis.

I am curious to hear of this publication about Lord Byron and the Pisa circle. I hope it will not annoy him, as to me I am supremely indifferent. If you have not shown the letter I sent you, don't, until Hunt's arrival, when we shall certainly meet.

Your very sincere friend,

P. B. Shelley.

Mary is better, though still excessively weak.

Not long after, I followed in Byron's boat, the *Bolivar* schooner. There was no fault to find with her, Roberts and the builder had fashioned her after their own fancy, and she was both fast and safe. I manned her with five able seamen, four Genoese and one Englishman. I put into the Gulf of Spezzia, and found Shelley in ecstasy with his boat, and Williams as touchy about her reputation as if she had been his wife. They were hardly ever out of her, and talked of the Mediterranean as a lake too confined and tranquil to exhibit her sea-going excellence. They longed to be on the broad Atlantic, scudding under bare poles in a heavy sou'wester, with plenty of sea room. I went out for a sail in Shelley's boat to see how they would manage her. It was great fun to witness Williams teaching the Poet how to steer, and other points of seamanship. As usual, Shelley had a book in hand, saying he could read and steer at the same time, as one was mental, the other mechanical.

'Luff!' said Williams.

Shelley put the helm the wrong way. Williams corrected him.

'Do you see those two white objects a-head? keep them in a line, the wind is heading us.' Then, turning to me, he said: 'Lend me a hand to haul in the main-sheet, and I will show you how close she can lay to the wind to work off a lee-shore.'

'No,' I answered, 'I am a passenger, and won't touch a rope.'

'Luff,' said Williams, as the boat was yawing about. 'Shelley, you can't steer, you have got her in the wind's eye; give me the tiller, and you attend the main-sheet. Ready about!' said Williams. 'Helms down—let go the fore-sheet—see how she spins round on her heel—is not she a beauty? Now,

Shelley, let go the main-sheet, and boy, haul aft the jib-sheet!'

The main-sheet was jammed, and the boat unmanageable, or as sailors express it, in irons; when the two had cleared it, Shelley's hat was knocked overboard, and he would probably have followed, if I had not held him. He was so uncommonly awkward, that when they had things ship-shape, Williams, somewhat scandalised at the lubberly manœuvre, blew up the Poet for his neglect and inattention to orders. Shelley was, however, so happy and in such high glee, and the nautical terms so tickled his fancy, that he even put his beloved Plato in his pocket, and gave his mind up to fun and frolic.

'You will do no good with Shelley,' I said, 'until you heave his books and papers overboard; shear the wisps of hair that hang over his eyes; and plunge his arms up to the elbows in a tar-bucket. And you, captain, will have no authority, until you dowse your frock coat and cavalry boots. You see I am stripped for a swim, so please, whilst I am on board, to keep within swimming distance of the land.'

The boy was quick and handy, and used to boats. Williams was not as deficient as I anticipated, but over-anxious and wanted practice, which alone makes a man prompt in emergency. Shelley was intent on catching images from the ever-changing sea and sky, he heeded not the boat. On my suggesting the addition to their crew of a Genoese sailor accustomed to the coast—such as I had on board the *Bolivar*,—Williams, thinking I under-valued his efficiency as a seaman, was scandalised—'as if we three seasoned salts were not enough to manage an open boat, when lubberly sloops and cutters of fifty or sixty tons were worked by as few men on the rough seas and iron-bound coast of Scotland!'

'Yes,' I answered, 'but what a difference between those sea-lions and you and our water-poet! A decked cutter besides, or even a frigate is easier handled in a gale or squall, and out-and-out safer to be on board of than an open boat. If we had been in a squall to-day with the main-sheet jammed, and the tiller put starboard instead of port, we should have had to swim for it.

'Not I: I should have gone down with the rest of the pigs in the bottom of the boat,' said Shelley, meaning the iron-pig ballast.

When I took my departure for Leghorn on board the *Bolivar*, they accompanied me out of the bay, and then we parted. I arrived at Leghorn the same night. I found my Lord Inglese had at last mustered sufficient energy to move from Pisa to Monte Nero, near Leghorn; I condoled with him on the change, for his new flimsy-built villa—not unlike the suburban verandahed cockney boxes on the Thames—was ten times hotter than the old palace he had left, with its cool marble halls, and arched and lofty floors that defied the sun. He was satisfied with his boat, but by no means with its cost; he took little interest in her, and I could not induce him to take a cruise; he always had some excuse. The first time he came on board, he said in answer to something I pointed out in the rigging:—

'People think I must be a bit of a sailor from my writings. All the sea-terms I use are from authority, and they cost me time, toil and trouble to look them out; but you will find me a land-lubber. I hardly know the stem from the stern, and don't know the name or use of a single rope or sail; I know the deep sea is blue, and not green, as that greenhorn Shakespeare always calls it.'

This was literally true; in regard to Byron, he

neither knew nor cared to know, nor ever asked a question (except when writing) about sea-terms or sea-life.

Towards the end of June, 1822, the long expected family of the Hunts arrived by sea from England.

Byron observed, 'You will find Leigh Hunt a gentleman in dress and address.'

I found him that, and something more; and with a quaint fancy and cultivated mind. He was in high spirits, and disposed to be pleased with others. His anticipated literary projects in conjunction with Byron and Shelley were a source of great pleasure to him—so was the land of beauty and song. He had come to it as to a new home, in which as the immortal Robins would have said: 'You will find no nuisance but the litter of the rose-leaves and the noise of the nightingales.' The pleasure that surpassed all the rest, was the anticipation of seeing speedily his friend Shelley. But, alas! all those things which seemed so certain—

> Those juggling fiends
> That keep the word of promise to our ear,
> And break it to our hope,

so kept—and so broke—it with Leigh Hunt.

CHAPTER XI

What is life, what is death,
What are we? that when the ship sinks
We no longer may be.

SHELLEY.

SHELLEY, with his friend Williams, soon came in their boat, scudding into the harbour of Leghorn. They went with the Hunts to Pisa, and established them in Lord Byron's palace, Shelley having furnished a floor there for them. In a few days Shelley returned to Leghorn, and found Williams eager to to be off. We had a sail outside the port in the two boats. Shelley was in a mournful mood; his mind depressed by a recent interview with Byron.

Byron, at first, had been more eager than Shelley for Leigh Hunt's arrival in Italy to edit and contribute to the proposed new Review, and so continued until his English correspondents had worked on his fears. They did not oppose, for they knew his temper too well, but artfully insinuated that he was jeopardising his fame and fortune, &c., &c., &c. Shelley found Byron so irritable, so shuffling and equivocating, whilst talking with him on the fulfilment of his promise with regard to Leigh Hunt,—that, but for imperilling Hunt's prospects, Shelley's intercourse with Byron would then have abruptly terminated; it was doomed to be their last meeting.

On Saturday, the 6th, Williams wrote the following letter to his wife at the Villa Magni.

'I have just left the quay, my dearest girl, and the wind blows right across to Spezzia, which adds to the

vexation I feel at being unable to leave this place. For my own part, I should have been with you in all probability on Wednesday evening, but I have been kept day after day, waiting for Shelley's definitive arrangements with Lord B. relative to poor Hunt, whom, in my opinion, he has treated vilely. A letter from Mary, of the most gloomy kind, reached S. yesterday, and this mood of hers aggravated my uneasiness to see you; for I am proud, dear girl, beyond words to express, in the conviction, that *wherever* we may be together you could be cheerful and contented.

'Would I could take the present gale by the wings and reach you to-night; hard as it blows, I would venture across for *such* a reward. However, to-morrow something decisive shall take place; and if I am detained, I shall depart in a felúca, and leave the boat to be brought round in company with Trelawny in the *Bolivar*. He talks of visiting Spezzia again in a few days. I am tired to death of waiting—this is our longest separation, and seems a year to me. Absence alone is enough to make me anxious, and indeed, unhappy; but I think if I had left you in our own house in solitude, I should feel it less than I do now.—What can I do? Poor S. desires that I should return to you, but I know secretly wishes me not to leave him in the lurch. He too, by his manner, is as anxious to see you almost as I could be, but the interests of poor H. keep him here;—in fact, with Lord B. it appears they cannot do anything,—who actually said as much as that he did not wish (?) his name to be attached to the work, and of course to theirs.

'In Lord Byron's family all is confusion;—the cut-throats he is so desirous to have about him, have involved him in a second row; and although the

present banishment of the Gambas from Tuscany is attributed to the first affair of the dragoon, the continued disturbances among his and their servants is, I am sure, the principal cause for its being carried into immediate effect. Four days (commencing from the day of our arrival in Leghorn) were only given them to find another retreat; and as Lord B. considers this a personal, though tacit attack upon himself, he chooses to follow their fortunes in another country. Genoa was first selected,—of that government they could have no hope;—Geneva was then proposed, and this proved as bad if not worse. Lucca is now the choice, and Trelawny was despatched last night to feel their way with the governor, to whom he carried letters. All this time Hunt is shuffled off from day to day, and now, heaven knows, when or how it will end.

'Lord B.'s reception of Mrs. H. was—as S. tells me—most shameful. She came into his house sick and exhausted, and he scarcely deigned to notice her; was silent, and scarcely bowed. This conduct cut H. to the soul; but the way in which he received our friend Roberts, at Dunn's door, shall be described when we meet:—it must be acted. How I long to see you: I had written *when*, but I will make no promises, for I too well know how distressing it is to both of us to break them. Tuesday evening at furthest, unless kept by the weather, I will say, "Oh, Jane! how fervently I press you and our little ones to my heart."

'Adieu!—Take body and soul: for you are at once my heaven and earth;—that is all I ask of both.

'E. Elk. W——.

'S. is at Pisa, and will write to-night to me.'

The last entry in Williams's Journal is dated July 4, 1822, Leghorn.

'Processions of priests and religiosi have been for several days past praying for rain: but the gods are either angry, or nature too powerful.'

The affair of the dragoon alluded to in Williams's letter, as connected with the Gambas was this:—As Byron and his companions were returning to Pisa on horseback, the road being blocked up by the party,—a serjeant-major on duty in their rear trotted his horse through the cavalcade. One of the awkward literary squad,—a resolute bore, but timid rider,—was nearly spilt, from his nag shying. To divert the jeers from his own bad riding, he appealed pathetically to Byron, saying:—

'Shall we endure this man's insolence?'

Byron said:—'No, we will bring him to an account;' and instantly galloped after the dragoon into Pisa, his party following. The guard at the gate turned out with drawn swords, but could not stop them. Some of the servants of Byron and the Gambas were idling on the steps of his palace; getting a glimpse of the row, one of them armed himself with a stable-fork, rushed at the dragoon as he passed Byron's palace, and wounded him severely in the side. This scene was acted in broad daylight on the Lung' Arno, the most public place in the city, scores of people looking on! yet the police, with their host of spies and backed by the power of a despotic government, could never ascertain who struck the blow.

Not liking to meddle with the Poet, they imprisoned two of his servants, and exiled the family of Count Gamba. Byron chose to follow them. Such is the hatred of the Italians to their rulers and all who have authority over them, that the blind

beggars at the corners of the streets,—no others are permitted to beg in Tuscany,—hearing that the English were without arms, sidled up to some of them, adroitly putting into their hands formidable stilettos, which they had concealed in the sleeves of their ragged gaberdines.

Shelley wrote me the following note about the dragoon.

My dear T.

Gamba is with me, and we are drawing up a paper demanded of us by the police. Mary tells me that you have an account from Lord Byron of the affair, and we wish to see it before ours is concluded. The man is severely wounded in the side, and his life is supposed to be in danger from the weapon having grazed the liver. It were as well if you could come here, as we shall decide on no statement without you.

Ever yours truly,

Shelley.

Mrs. Shelley, writing an account of the row, says:

'Madame G. and I happened to be in the carriage, ten paces behind, and saw the whole. Taaffe kept at a safe distance during the fray, but fearing the consequence, he wrote such a report that Lord Byron quarrelled with him; and what between insolence and abject humility he has kept himself in hot water, when, in fact, he had nothing to fear.'

On Monday, July 8, 1822, I went with Shelley to his bankers, and then to a store. It was past one p.m. when we went on board our respective boats,—Shelley and Williams to return to their home in the Gulf of Spezzia; I in the *Bolivar* to accompany them into the offing. When we were

under weigh, the guard-boat boarded us to overhaul our papers. I had not got my port clearance, the captain of the port having refused to give it to the mate, as I had often gone out without. The officer of the Health Office consequently threatened me with forty days' quarantine. It was hopeless to think of detaining my friends. Williams had been for days fretting and fuming to be off; they had no time to spare, it was past two o'clock, and there was very little wind.

Suddenly and reluctantly I re-anchored, furled my sails, and with a ship's glass watched the progress of my friend's boat. My Genoese mate observed,—'They should have sailed this morning at three or four a.m., instead of three p.m. They are standing too much in shore; the current will set them there.'

I said, 'They will soon have the land-breeze.'

'May-be,' continued the mate, 'she will soon have too much breeze; that gaff top-sail is foolish in a boat with no deck and no sailor on board.' Then pointing to the S.W., 'Look at those black lines and the dirty rags hanging on them out of the sky—they are a warning; look at the smoke on the water; the devil is brewing mischief.'

There was a sea-fog, in which Shelley's boat was soon after enveloped, and we saw nothing more of her.

Although the sun was obscured by mists, it was oppressively sultry. There was not a breath of air in the harbour. The heaviness of the atmosphere and an unwonted stillness benumbed my senses. I went down into the cabin and sank into a slumber. I was roused up by a noise over-head and went on deck. The men were getting up a chain cable to let go another anchor. There was a general stir amongst the shipping; shifting berths, getting down yards

and masts, veering out cables, hauling in of hawsers, letting go anchors, hailing from the ships and quays, boats sculling rapidly to and fro. It was almost dark, although only half-past six o'clock. The sea was of the colour, and looked as solid and smooth as a sheet of lead, and covered with an oily scum. Gusts of wind swept over without ruffling it, and big drops of rain fell on its surface, rebounding, as if they could not penetrate it. There was a commotion in the air, made up of many threatening sounds, coming upon us from the sea. Fishing-craft and coasting-vessels under bare poles rushed by us in shoals, running foul of the ships in the harbour. As yet the din and hubbub was that made by men, but their shrill pipings were suddenly silenced by the crashing voice of a thunder squall that burst right over our heads. For some time no other sounds were to be heard than the thunder, wind, and rain. When the fury of the storm, which did not last for more than twenty minutes, had abated, and the horizon was in some degree cleared, I looked to seaward anxiously, in the hope of descrying Shelley's boat, amongst the many small craft scattered about. I watched every speck that loomed on the horizon, thinking that they would have borne up on their return to the port, as all the other boats that had gone out in the same direction had done.

I sent our Genoese mate on board some of the returning craft to make inquiries, but they all professed not to have seen the English boat. So remorselessly are the quarantine laws enforced in Italy, that, when at sea, if you render assistance to a vessel in distress, or rescue a drowning stranger, on returning to port you are condemned to a long and rigorous quarantine of fourteen or more days. The consequence is, should one vessel see another in peril, or

even run it down by accident, she hastens on her course, and by general accord not a word is said or reported on the subject. But to resume my tale. I did not leave the *Bolivar* until dark. During the night it was gusty and showery, and the lightning flashed along the coast: at daylight I returned on board, and resumed my examination of the crews of the various boats which had returned to the port during the night. They either knew nothing, or would say nothing. My Genoese, with the quick eye of a sailor, pointed out, on board a fishing-boat, an English-made oar, that he thought he had seen in Shelley's boat, but the entire crew swore by all the saints in the calendar that this was not so. Another day was passed in horrid suspense. On the morning of the third day I rode to Pisa. Byron had returned to the Lanfranchi Palace. I hoped to find a letter from the Villa Magni: there was none. I told my fears to Hunt, and then went upstairs to Byron. When I told him, his lip quivered, and his voice faltered as he questioned me. I sent a courier to Leghorn to despatch the *Bolivar*, to cruise along the coast, whilst I mounted my horse and rode in the same direction. I also despatched a courier along the coast to go as far as Nice. On my arrival at Via Reggio I heard that a punt, a water-keg, and some bottles had been found on the beach. These things I recognised as having been in Shelley's boat when he left Leghorn. Nothing more was found for seven or eight days, during which time of painful suspense I patrolled the coast with the coast-guard, stimulating them to keep a good look-out by the promise of a reward. It was not until many days after this that my worst fears were confirmed. Two bodies were found on the shore,—one near Via Reggia, which I went and examined. The face and hands,

and parts of the body not protected by the dress, were fleshless. The tall slight figure, the jacket, the volume of Sophocles in one pocket, and Keats's poems in the other, doubled back, as if the reader, in the act of reading, had hastily thrust it away, were all too familiar to me to leave a doubt on my mind that this mutilated corpse was any other than Shelley's. The other body was washed on shore three miles distant from Shelley's, near the tower of Migliarino, at the Bocca Lericcio. I went there at once. This corpse was much more mutilated; it had no other covering than,—the shreds of a shirt, and that partly drawn over the head, as if the wearer had been in the act of taking it off,—a black silk handkerchief, tied sailor-fashion around the neck,—socks,—and one boot, indicating also that he had attempted to strip. The flesh, sinews, and muscles hung about in rags, like the shirt, exposing the ribs and bones. I had brought with me from Shelley's house a boot of Williams's, and this exactly matched the one the corpse had on. That, and the handkerchief, satisfied me that it was the body of Shelley's comrade. Williams was the only one of the three who could swim, and it is probable he was the last survivor. It is likewise possible, as he had a watch and money, and was better dressed than the others, that his body might have been plundered when found. Shelley always declared that in case of wreck he would vanish instantly, and not imperil valuable lives by permitting others to aid in saving his, which he looked upon as valueless. It was not until three weeks after the wreck of the boat that a third body was found—four miles from the other two. This I concluded to be that of the sailor boy, Charles Vivian, although it was a mere skeleton, and impossible to be identified. It was buried in the sand,

above the reach of the waves. I mounted my horse, and rode to the Gulf of Spezzia, put up my horse, and walked until I caught sight of the lone house on the sea-shore in which Shelley and Williams had dwelt, and where their widows still lived. Hitherto in my frequent visits—in the absence of direct evidence to the contrary—I had buoyed up their spirits by maintaining that it was not impossible but that the friends still lived; now I had to extinguish the last hope of these forlorn women. I had ridden fast, to prevent any ruder messenger from bursting in upon them. As I stood on the threshold of their house, the bearer, or rather confirmer, of news which would rack every fibre of their quivering frames to the utmost, I paused, and, looking at the sea, my memory reverted to our joyous parting only a few days before.

The two families, then, had all been in the verandah, overhanging a sea so clear and calm that every star was reflected on the water, as if it had been a mirror; the young mothers singing some merry tune, with the accompaniment of a guitar. Shelley's shrill laugh—I heard it still—rang in my ears, with Williams's friendly hail, the general *buona notte* of all the joyous party, and the earnest entreaty to me to return as soon as possible, and not to forget the commissions they had severally given me. I was in a small boat beneath them, slowly rowing myself on board the *Bolivar*, at anchor in the bay, loath to part from what I verily believed to have been at that time the most united, and happiest, set of human beings in the whole world. And now by the blow of an idle puff of wind the scene was changed. Such is human happiness.

My reverie was broken by a shriek from the nurse Caterina, as, crossing the hall, she saw me in the

doorway. After asking her a few questions, I went up the stairs, and, unannounced, entered the room. I neither spoke, nor did they question me. Mrs. Shelley's large grey eyes were fixed on my face. I turned away. Unable to bear this horrid silence, with a convulsive effort she exclaimed—

'Is there no hope?'

I did not answer, but left the room, and sent the servant with the children to them. The next day I prevailed on them to return with me to Pisa. The misery of that night and the journey of the next day, and of many days and nights that followed, I can neither describe nor forget. It was ultimately determined by those most interested, that Shelley's remains should be removed from where they lay, and conveyed to Rome, to be interred near the bodies of his child, and of his friend Keats, with a suitable monument, and that Williams's remains should be taken to England. To do this, in their then far advanced state of decomposition, and to obviate the obstacles offered by the quarantine laws, the ancient custom of burning and reducing the body to ashes was suggested. I wrote to our minister at Florence, Dawkins, on the subject, and solicited his friendly intercession with the Lucchese and Florentine governments, that I might be furnished with authority to accomplish our purpose.

The following was his answer:—

Dear Sir,

An order was sent yesterday from hence to the Governor of Via Reggio, to deliver up the remains of Mr. Shelley to you, or any person empowered by you to receive them.

I said they were to be removed to Leghorn for interment, but that need not bind you. If they go

by sea, the governor will give you the papers necessary to insure their admittance elsewhere. If they travel by land, they must be accompanied by a guard as far as the frontier,—a precaution always taken to prevent the possibility of infection. Quicklime has been thrown into the graves, as is usual in similar cases.

With respect to the removal of the other corpse, I can tell you nothing till I hear from Florence. I applied for the order as soon as I received your letter, and I expect an answer to my letter by to-morrow's post.

I am very sensible of Lord Byron's kindness, and should have called upon him when I passed through Pisa, had he been anybody but Lord Byron. Do not mention trouble; I am here to take as much as my countrymen think proper to give me; and all I ask in return is fair play and good humour, which I am sure I shall always find in the S. S. S.

Believe me, dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

W. Dawkins.

Such were his subsequent influence and energy, that he ultimately overcame all the obstacles and repugnance of the Italians to sanction such an unprecedented proceeding in their territories.

CHAPTER XII

All things that we love and cherish,
Like ourselves, must fade and perish;
Such is our rude mortal lot,
Love itself would, did they not.

SHELLEY.

I GOT a furnace made at Leghorn, of iron-bars and strong sheet-iron, supported on a stand, and laid in a stock of fuel, and such things as were said to be used by Shelley's much loved Hellenes on their funeral pyres.

On August 13, 1822, I went on board the *Bolivar*, with an English acquaintance, having written to Byron and Hunt to say I would send them word when everything was ready, as they wished to be present. I had previously engaged two large feluccas, with drags and tackling, to go before, and endeavour to find the place where Shelley's boat had foundered; the captain of one of the feluccas having asserted that he was out in the fatal squall, and had seen Shelley's boat go down off Via Reggio, with all sail set. With light and fitful breezes we were eleven hours reaching our destination—the tower of Migliarino, at the Bocca Lericcio, in the Tuscan States. There was a village there, and about two miles from that place Williams was buried. So I anchored, landed, called on the officer in command, a major, and told him my object in coming, of which he was already apprised by his own government. He assured me I should have every aid from him. As it was too late in the day

to commence operations, we went to the only inn in the place, and I wrote to Byron to be with us next day at noon. The major sent my letter to Pisa by a dragoon, and made arrangements for the next day. In the morning he was with us early, and gave me a note from Byron, to say he would join us as near noon as he could. At ten we went on board the commandant's boat, with a squad of soldiers in working dresses, armed with mattocks and spades, an officer of the quarantine service, and some of his crew. They had their peculiar tools, so fashioned as to do their work without coming into personal contact with things that might be infectious—long handled tongs, nippers, poles with iron hooks and spikes, and divers others that gave one a lively idea of the implements of torture devised by the holy inquisitors. Thus freighted, we started, my own boat following with the furnace, and the things I had brought from Leghorn. We pulled along the shore for some distance, and landed at a line of strong posts and railings which projected into the sea—forming the boundary dividing the Tuscan and Lucchese States. We walked along the shore to the grave, where Byron and Hunt soon joined us: they, too, had an officer and soldiers from the tower of Migliarino, an officer of the Health Office, and some dismounted dragoons, so we were surrounded by soldiers, but they kept the ground clear, and readily lent their aid. There was a considerable gathering of spectators from the neighbourhood, and many ladies richly dressed were amongst them. The spot where the body lay was marked by the gnarled root of a pine tree.

A rude hut, built of young pine-tree stems, and wattled with their branches, to keep the sun and rain out, and thatched with reeds, stood on the beach to

shelter the look-out man on duty. A few yards from this was the grave, which we commenced opening—the Gulf of Spezzia and Leghorn at equal distances of twenty-two miles from us. As to fuel I might have saved myself the trouble of bringing any, for there was an ample supply of broken spars and planks cast on the shore from wrecks, besides the fallen and decaying timber in a stunted pine forest close at hand. The soldiers collected fuel whilst I erected the furnace, and then the men of the Health Office set to work, shovelling away the sand which covered the body, while we gathered round, watching anxiously. The first indication of their having found the body, was the appearance of the end of a black silk handkerchief—I grubbed this out with a stick, for we were not allowed to touch anything with our hands—then some shreds of linen were met with, and a boot with the bone of the leg and the foot in it. On the removal of a layer of brushwood, all that now remained of my lost friend was exposed—a shapeless mass of bones and flesh. The limbs separated from the trunk on being touched.

'Is that a human body?' exclaimed Byron; 'why it's more like the carcase of a sheep, or any other animal, than a man: this is a satire on our pride and folly.'

I pointed to the letters E. E. W. on the black silk handkerchief.

Byron looking on, muttered, 'The entrails of a worm hold together longer than the potter's clay, of which man is made. Hold! let me see the jaw,' he added, as they were removing the skull, 'I can recognise any one by the teeth, with whom I have talked. I always watch the lips and mouth: they tell what the tongue and eyes try to conceal.'

I had a boot of Williams's with me; it exactly

corresponded with the one found in the grave. The remains were removed piecemeal into the furnace.

'Don't repeat this with me,' said Byron; 'let my carcase rot where it falls.'

The funereal pyre was now ready; I applied the fire, and the materials being dry and resinous the pine-wood burnt furiously, and drove us back. It was hot enough before, there was no breath of air, and the loose sand scorched our feet. As soon as the flames became clear, and allowed us to approach, we threw frankincense and salt into the furnace, and poured a flask of wine and oil over the body. The Greek oration was omitted, for we had lost our Hellenic bard. It was now so insufferably hot that the officers and soldiers were all seeking shade.

'Let us try the strength of these waters that drowned our friends,' said Byron, with his usual audacity. 'How far out do you think they were when their boat sank?'

'If you don't wish to be put into the furnace, you had better not try; you are not in condition.'

He stripped, and went into the water, and so did I and my companion. Before we got a mile out, Byron was sick, and persuaded to return to the shore. My companion, too, was seized with cramp, and reached the land by my aid. At four o'clock the funereal pyre burnt low, and when we uncovered the furnace, nothing remained in it but dark-coloured ashes, with fragments of the larger bones. Poles were now put under the red-hot furnace, and it was gradually cooled in the sea. I gathered together the human ashes, and placed them in a small oak-box, bearing an inscription on a brass plate, screwed it down, and placed it in Byron's carriage. He returned with Hunt to Pisa, promising to be with us on the following day at Via Reggio.

I returned with my party in the same way we came, and supped and slept at the inn. On the following morning we went on board the same boats, with the same things and party, and rowed down the little river near Via Reggio to the sea, pulled along the coast towards Massa, then landed, and began our preparations as before.

Three white wands had been stuck in the sand to mark the Poet's grave, but as they were at some distance from each other, we had to cut a trench thirty yards in length, in the line of the sticks, to ascertain the exact spot, and it was nearly an hour before we came upon the grave.

In the meantime Byron and Leigh Hunt arrived in the carriage, attended by soldiers, and the Health Officer, as before. The lonely and grand scenery that surrounded us so exactly harmonised with Shelley's genius, that I could imagine his spirit soaring over us. The sea, with the islands of Gorgona, Capraji, and Elba, was before us; old battlemented watch-towers stretched along the coast, backed by the marble-crested Apennines glistening in the sun, picturesque from their diversified outlines, and not a human dwelling was in sight. As I thought of the delight Shelley felt in such scenes of loneliness and grandeur whilst living, I felt we were no better than a herd of wolves or a pack of wild dogs, in tearing out his battered and naked body from the pure yellow sand that lay so lightly over it, to drag him back to the light of day; but the dead have no voice, nor had I power to check the sacrilege—the work went on silently in the deep and unresisting sand, not a word was spoken, for the Italians have a touch of sentiment, and their feelings are easily excited into sympathy. Even Byron was silent and thoughtful. We were startled and drawn together

by a dull hollow sound that followed the blow of a mattock; the iron had struck a skull, and the body was soon uncovered. Lime had been strewn on it; this, or decomposition, had the effect of staining it of a dark and ghastly indigo colour. Byron asked me to preserve the skull for him; but remembering that he had formerly used one as a drinking-cup, I was determined Shelley's should not be so profaned. The limbs did not separate from the trunk, as in the case of Williams's body, so that the corpse was removed entire into the furnace. I had taken the precaution of having more and larger pieces of timber, in consequence of my experience of the day before of the difficulty of consuming a corpse in the open air with our apparatus. After the fire was well kindled we repeated the ceremony of the previous day; and more wine was poured over Shelley's dead body than he had consumed during his life. This with the oil and salt made the yellow flames glisten and quiver. The heat from the sun and fire was so intense that the atmosphere was tremulous and wavy. The corpse fell open and the heart was laid bare. The frontal bone of the skull, where it had been struck with the mattock, fell off; and, as the back of the head rested on the red-hot bottom bars of the furnace, the brains literally seethed, bubbled, and boiled as in a cauldron, for a very long time.

Byron could not face this scene, he withdrew to the beach and swam off to the *Bolivar*. Leigh Hunt remained in the carriage. The fire was so fierce as to produce a white heat on the iron, and to reduce its contents to grey ashes. The only portions that were not consumed were some fragments of bones, the jaw, and the skull, but what surprised us all, was that the heart remained entire.

In snatching this relic from the fiery furnace, my hand was severely burnt; and had any one seen me do the act I should have been put into quarantine.

After cooling the iron machine in the sea, I collected the human ashes and placed them in a box, which I took on board the *Bolivar*. Byron and Hunt retraced their steps to their home, and the officers and soldiers returned to their quarters. I liberally rewarded the men for the admirable manner in which they behaved during the two days they had been with us.

As I undertook and executed this novel ceremony, I have been thus tediously minute in describing it.

Byron's idle talk during the exhumation of Williams's remains, did not proceed from want of feeling, but from his anxiety to conceal what he felt from others. When confined to his bed and racked by spasms, which threatened his life, I have heard him talk in a much more unorthodox fashion, the instant he could muster breath to banter. He had been taught during his town-life, that any exhibition of sympathy or feeling was maudlin and unmanly, and that the appearance of daring and indifference, denoted blood and high breeding.

CHAPTER XIII

An old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
Through public scorn—mud from a muddy spring,—
Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
Till they drop blind in blood.

England in 1819.—SHELLEY.

WHEN I arrived at Leghorn, as I could not immediately go on to Rome, I consigned Shelley's ashes to our Consul at Rome, Mr. Freeborn, requesting him to keep them in his custody until my arrival. When I reached Rome, Freeborn told me that to quiet the authorities there, he had been obliged to inter the ashes with the usual ceremonies in the Protestant burying-place. When I came to examine the ground with the man who had the custody of it, I found Shelley's grave amidst a cluster of others. The old Roman wall partly enclosed the place, and there was a niche in the wall formed by two buttresses—immediately under an ancient pyramid, said to be the tomb of Caius Cestius. There were no graves near it at that time. This suited my taste, so I purchased the recess, and sufficient space for planting a row of the Italian upright cypresses. As the souls of heretics are foredoomed by the Roman priests, they do not affect to trouble themselves about their bodies. There was no 'faculty' to apply for, nor bishop's licence to exhume the body. The custode or guardian who dwelt within the enclosure and had the key of the gate, seemed

to have uncontrolled power within his domain, and scudi impressed with the image of Saint Peter with the two keys, ruled him. Without more ado, masons were hired, and two tombs built in the recess. In one of these, when completed, I deposited the box, with Shelley's ashes, and covered it in with solid stone, inscribed with a Latin epitaph, written by Leigh Hunt. I received the following note at Leghorn previous to burning the body:—

'*Pisa*, 1*st August*, 1822.

'Dear Trelawny,

'You will of course call upon us in your way to your melancholy task; but I write to say, that you must not reckon upon passing through Pisa in a very great hurry, as the ladies particularly wish to have an evening, while you are here, for consulting further with us; and I myself mean, at all events, to accompany you on your journey, if you have no objection.

'I subjoin the inscriptions—mere matter-of-fact memorandums—according to the wish of the ladies. It will be for the other inscriptions to say more.

'Yours sincerely,

'Leigh Hunt.

'PS.—Mrs. Shelley wishes very much that Capt. Roberts would be kind enough to write to his uncle about her desk, begging it to be forwarded as speedily as possible. If it is necessary to be opened, the best way will be to buy a key for that purpose; but if a key is not to be had, of course it must be broken open. As there is something in the secret drawers, it will be extremely desirable that as few persons meddle with it as possible.

'PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY, ANGLUS, ORAM ETRUSCAM LEGENS IN NAVIGIOLO INTER LIGURNUM PORTUM ET VIAM REGIAM, PROCELLÂ PERIIT VIII. NON. JUL. MDCCCXXII. ÆTAT. SUÆ XXX.

'EDVARDUS ELLIKER WILLIAMS, ANGLICÂ STIRPE ORTUS, INDIÂ ORIENTALI NATUS, A LIGURNO PORTU IN VIAM REGIAM NAVIGIOLO PROFICISCENS, TEMPESTATE PERIIT VIII. NON. JUL. MDCCCXXII. ÆTAT. SUÆ XXX.'

'IO, SOTTOSCRITTA, PREGO LE AUTORITÀ DI VIA REGGIO O LIVORNO DI CONSEGNARE AL SIGNORE ODOARDO TRELAWNY, INGLESE, LA BARCA NOMINATA IL DON JUAN, E TUTTA LA SUA CARICA, APPARTENENTE AL MIO MARITO, PER ESSERE ALLA SUA DISPOZIZIONE.

'MARIA SHELLEY.

'GENOVA, 16 SETTbre, 1822.'

To which I added two lines from Shelley's favourite play *The Tempest*,

> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea change into something
> Rich and strange.

The other tomb built merely to fill up the recess, was likewise covered in the same way—but blank without as within. I planted eight seedling cypresses. When I last saw them in 1844, the seven which remained, were about thirty-five feet in height. I added flowers as well. The ground I had purchased, I inclosed, and so ended my task.

Shelley came of a long-lived race, and, barring accidents, there was no reason why he should not have emulated his forefathers in attaining a ripe age. He had no other complaint than occasional spasms, and these were probably caused by the excessive and almost unremitting strain on his mental

powers, the solitude of his life, and his long fasts, which were not intentional, but proceeded from the abstraction and forgetfulness of himself and his wife. If food was near him, he ate it,—if not, he fasted, and it was after long fasts that he suffered from spasms. He was tall, slim, and bent from eternally poring over books; this habit had contracted his chest. His limbs were well proportioned, strong and bony—his head was very small—and his features were expressive of great sensibility, and decidedly feminine. There was nothing about him outwardly to attract notice, except his extraordinarily juvenile appearance. At twenty-nine, he still retained on his tanned and freckled cheeks, the fresh look of a boy—although his long wild locks were coming into blossom, as a polite hairdresser once said to me, whilst cutting mine.

It was not until he spoke that you could discern anything uncommon in him—but the first sentence he uttered, when excited by his subject, riveted your attention. The light from his very soul streamed from his eyes, and every mental emotion of which the human mind is susceptible, was expressed in his pliant and ever-changing features. He left the conviction on the minds of his audience, that however great he was as a Poet, he was greater as an orator. There was another and most rare peculiarity in Shelley,—his intellectual faculties completely mastered his material nature, and hence he unhesitatingly acted up to his own theories, if they only demanded sacrifices on his part,—it was where they implicated others that he forbore. Mrs. Shelley has observed, 'Many have suggested and advocated far greater innovations in our political and social system than Shelley; but he alone practised those he approved of as just.'

Godwin observed to me,—'that Byron must occasionally have said good things, though not capable, as Shelley was, of keeping up a long conversation or argument; and that Shelley must have been of great use to Byron, as from the commencement of their intimacy at Geneva, he could trace an entirely new vein of thought emanating from Shelley, which ran through Byron's subsequent works, and was so peculiar that it could not have arisen from any other source.' This was true. Byron was but superficial on points on which Shelley was most profound—and the latter's capacity for study, the depth of his thoughts as well as their boldness, and his superior scholarship, supplied the former with exactly what he wanted: and thus a portion of Shelley's aspirations were infused into Byron's mind. Ready as Shelley always was with his purse or person to assist others, his purse had a limit, but his mental wealth seemed to have none; for not only to Byron, but to any one disposed to try his hand at literature, Shelley was ever ready to give any amount of mental labour. Every detail of the life of a man of genius is interesting, and Shelley's was so pre-eminently, as his life harmonised with his spiritual theories. He fearlessly laid bare those mysterious feelings and impulses, of which few dare to speak, but in a form so purified from earthy matter that the most sensitive reader is never shocked. Shelley says of his own writings in the preface to the *Cenci*,—'they are little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just,—they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be.' Whilst he lived, his works fell still-born from the press—he never complained of the world's neglect, or expressed any other feeling than surprise at the rancorous abuse wasted on an author who had no readers. 'But for

them,' he said, laughing, 'I should be utterly unknown.' 'But for them,' I observed, 'Williams and I should never have crossed the Alps in chase of you. Our curiosity as sportsmen, was excited to see and have a shot at so strange a monster as they represented you to be.'

It must not be forgotten, that Shelley lived in the good old times, under the paternal government of the Tories, when liberal opinions were prohibited and adjudged as contraband of war. England was then very much like what Naples is now.

Sidney Smith says,—

'From the beginning of the century to the death of Lord Liverpool, was an awful period for any one who ventured to maintain liberal opinions. He was sure to be assailed with all the Billingsgate of the French Revolution; 'Jacobin,' 'Leveller,' 'Atheist,' 'Incendiary,' 'Regicide,' were the gentlest terms used, and any man who breathed a syllable against the senseless bigotry of the two Georges, was shunned as unfit for social life. To say a word against any abuse which a rich man inflicted, and a poor man suffered, was bitterly and steadily resented,' and he adds, 'that in one year, 12,000 persons were committed for offences against the Game Laws.'

Shelley's life was a proof that the times in which he lived were awful for those who dared to maintain liberal opinions. They caused his expulsion from Oxford, and for them his parents discarded him, every member of his family disowned him, and the savage Chancellor Eldon deprived him of his children.

Sidney Smith says of this Chancellor, that he was 'the most heartless, bigoted, and mischievous of human beings, who passed a long life in perpetuating all sorts of abuses, and in making money of them.'

CHAPTER XIV

It is mentioned in my narrative, that when I left Leghorn, in the *Bolivar*, to burn the bodies, I despatched two large feluccas, with ground-tackling to drag for Shelley's foundered boat, having previously ascertained the spot in which she had been last seen afloat. This was done for five or six days, and they succeeded in finding her, but failed in getting her up. I then wrote the particulars to my friend Capt. Roberts, who was still at Genoa, asking him to complete the business. He did so, whilst I went on to Rome, and, as will be seen by the following letters, he not only found, but got her up, and brought her into the harbour of Leghorn.

Pisa, Sept. 1822.

Dear T.

We have got fast hold of Shelley's boat, and she is now safe at anchor off Via Reggio. Every thing is in her, and clearly proves, that she was not capsized. I think she must have been swamped by a heavy sea; we found in her two trunks, that of Williams, containing money and clothes, and Shelley's, filled with books and clothes.

Yours, very sincerely,

Dan Roberts.

Sept. 18, 1822.

Dear T.

I consulted Ld. B., on the subject of paying the crews of the felucca employed in getting up the boat. He advised me to sell her by auction, and to

give them half the proceeds of the sale. I rode your horse to Via Reggio. On Monday we had the sale, and only realised a trifle more than two hundred dollars.

The two masts were carried away just above board, the bowsprit broken off close to the bows, the gunwale stove in, and the hull half full of blue clay, out of which we fished clothes, books, spy-glass, and other articles. A hamper of wine that Shelley bought at Leghorn, a present for the harbour-master of Lerici, was spoilt, the corks forced partly out of the bottles, and the wine mixed with the salt-water. You know, this is effected by the pressure of the cold sea-water.

We found in the boat two memorandum-books of Shelley's, quite perfect, and another damaged, a journal of Williams's, quite perfect, written up to the 4th of July. I washed the printed books, some of them were so glued together by the slimy mud, that the leaves could not be separated; most of these things are now in Ld. B's custody. The letters, private papers, and Williams's journal, I left in charge of Hunt, as I saw there were many severe remarks on Ld. B.

Ld. B. has found out that you left at Genoa some of the ballast of the *Bolivar*, and he asked me to sell it for him. What a damned close calculating fellow he is. You are so bigoted in his favour that I will say no more, only God defend me from ever having anything more to do with him.

PS.—On a close examination of Shelley's boat, we find many of the timbers on the starboard quarter broken, which makes me think for certain, that she must have been run down by some of the feluccas in the squall.

Dan Roberts.

Byron's spirit was always on the fret and fume to be doing something new and strange; he exhausted himself in speculating, plotting, and planning; but when it came to the point of execution, the inertness of his body and his halting gait held him fast, so that few men even amongst the poets did more in imagination and less in reality than he did. One of his pleas for hoarding money was, that he might buy a province in Chili or Peru, to which he once added archly, 'of course with a gold or silver mine to pay usance for my monies:' at another time it was Mexico and copper; and when savage with the Britishers, he would threaten to go to the United States and be naturalised; he once asked me to apply to the American Consul at Leghorn, and Commodore Jones of the American navy, then in the harbour, offered him a passage. Byron visited the ship, and was well pleased with his reception; there was a beginning, but no middle or end to his enterprises. The under-current of his mind was always drifting towards the East; he envied the free and independent manner in which Lady Hester Stanhope lived in Syria, and often reverted to it. He said he would have gone there if she had not forestalled him.

Then his thoughts veered round to his early love, the Isles of Greece, and the revolution in that country—for before that time he never dreamt of donning the warrior's plume, though the peace-loving Shelley had suggested and I urged it. He asked me to get him any information I could amongst my friends at Leghorn of the state of Greece; but as it was a common practice of his to make such inquiries without any serious object, I took little heed of his request.

We were then at Pisa in the old palace, which he

was about giving up, Mrs. Shelley having gone to Genoa, and taken for him the Casa Saluzzi at Albaro, near Genoa; the Hunts too were about moving to the same destination. I had determined to return to Rome, but stopped to convoy them in the *Bolivar*.

When a lazy and passive master who has never learnt, or if he may have learnt has forgotten, how to put on his trousers, shave, or brush his hair, in a sudden ecstasy or impulse resolves to do everything for himself and everybody else, as Byron now attempted to do, the hubbub, din, and confusion that ensue are frightful. If the Casa Lanfranchi had been on fire at midnight it could not have been worse, nor I more pleased at escaping from it, as I did, under the plea of getting the flotilla ready at Leghorn.

In September we all left Tuscany, Byron by land, the Hunts in one felucca; and Byron's servants, and what the Yankee would have called a freight of notions, in another; for as Byron never sold or gave away anything he had acquired, there was all the rubbish accumulated in the many years he had lived in Italy, besides his men, women, dogs, and monkeys, and all that was theirs. In the *Bolivar* I had only a few things, such as plate, books, and papers; we put into Lerici, and there all met again. I took Hunt to the Villa Magni where Shelley had lived. Byron came on board the *Bolivar*, we had a sail and a swim, after which he was seized with spasms and remained two days in bed. On my visiting him and questioning him as to his ailments, he said he was always 'bedevilled for a week after moving.'

'No wonder,' I answered, 'if you always make such a dire commotion before it.'

'Look in that book,' pointing to one on the table, *Thomas's Domestic Medicine*, 'look for a prescription.'

'For what? what is your complaint?' I said, 'How do you feel?'

'Feel! why just as that damned obstreperous fellow felt chained to a rock, the vultures gnawing my midriff, and vitals too, for I have no liver.' As the spasms returned, he roared out, 'I don't care for dying, but I cannot bear this! It's past joking, call Fletcher; give me something that will end it—or me! I can't stand it much longer.'

His valet brought some ether and laudanum, and we compounded a drench as prescribed in the book, with an outward application of hot towels, and other remedies. Luckily, the medico of Lerici was absent, so in two or three days our patient was well enough to resume his journey, and we all started for Genoa where we arrived without further accident.

All that were now left of our Pisan circle established themselves at Albaro—Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Mrs. Shelley. I took up my quarters in the city of palaces. The fine spirit that had animated and held us together was gone! Left to our own devices, we degenerated apace. Shelley's solidity had checked Byron's flippancy, and induced him occasionally to act justly, and talk seriously; now he seemed more sordid and selfish than ever. He behaved shabbily to Mrs. Shelley; I might use a harsher epithet. In all the transactions between Shelley and Byron in which expenses had occurred, and they were many, the former, as was his custom, had paid all, the latter promising to repay; but as no one ever repaid Shelley, Byron did not see the necessity of his setting the example; and now that Mrs. Shelley was left destitute by her husband's

death, Byron did nothing for her. He regretted this when too late, for in our voyage to Greece he alluded to Shelley, saying, 'Tre, you did what I should have done, let us square accounts to-morrow; I must pay my debts.' I merely observed, 'Money is of no use at sea, and when you get on shore you will find you have none to spare;' he probably thought so too, for he said nothing more on the subject.

I was not surprised at Byron's niggardly ways, he had been taught them in boyhood by his mother. In early manhood he was a good fellow and did generous things; until bad company, called good society, spoilt and ruined him. To recover his fortune and sustain his pride, he relapsed into the penurious habits drilled into him in his youth.

CHAPTER XV

It is the same!—For be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free;
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

SHELLEY.

BYRON, in common with actors and other public characters, considered it indispensable to the preservation of his popularity that he should keep continually before the public; and that an alliance with an able and friendly newspaper would be an easy way of doing so. Not that he would or could submit to the methodical drudgery of continually writing for one, but that he might occasionally use it for criticising and attacking those who offended him, as a vent for his splenetic humours. Shelley, knowing Byron could not reason, and that his criticism degenerated into rancorous personality, opposed the scheme; still, Byron had a hankering to try his powers in those hand-to-hand conflicts then in vogue, even in the great Reviews. When he consented to join Leigh Hunt and others in writing for the *Liberal*, I think his principal inducement was in the belief that John and Leigh Hunt were proprietors of the *Examiner*; so when Leigh Hunt at Pisa told him he was no longer connected with that paper, Byron was taken aback, finding that Hunt would be entirely dependent on the success of their hazardous project, while he would himself be deprived of that on which he had set his heart,—the use of a weekly paper in great circulation.

The death of Shelley, and the failure of the *Liberal*, irritated Byron; the cuckoo note, 'I told you so,' sung by his friends, and the loud crowing of enemies, by no means allayed his ill-humour. In this frame of mind he was continually planning and plotting how to extricate himself. His plea for hoarding was that he might have a good round tangible sum of current coin to aid him in any emergency, as 'money,' he observed, 'is the only true and constant friend a wise man puts his trust in. I can now raise nine or ten thousand, and with that I can buy an island in the Greek Archipelago, or a principality of auriferous soil in Chili or Peru. Lady Hester Stanhope's way of life in Syria would just suit my humour.' I urged him on, for I was bent on travel and willing to go anywhere. He exhausted himself in planning, projecting, beginning, wishing, intending, postponing, regretting, and doing nothing; the unready are fertile in excuses, and his were inexhaustible; so I determined to be off. At this time a committee was formed in London to aid the Greeks in their war of independence, and shortly after I wrote to one of the most active movers in it, Lieut. Blaquiere, to ask information as to their objects and intentions, and mentioned Byron as being very much interested on the subject of Greece; the Lieutenant wrote, as from the committee, direct to Byron, in the grandiloquent style which all authorities, especially self-constituted ones, delight in. In the early part of 1823 Blaquiere on his way to the Ionian Islands, stopped at Genoa, and saw Byron, whom he informed of his intention to visit Greece, in order to see how matters were progressing. He said that his lordship had been unanimously elected a member of the Greek Committee, and that his name was a tower of strength; he

brought Byron's credentials, and a mass of papers. The propositions of the committee came at the right moment; the Pilgrim was dissatisfied with himself and his position. Greece and its memories warmed him, a new career opened before him. His first impulses were always ardent, but if not acted on instantly, they cooled. He was a prompt penman, often answering in hot haste letters that excited his feelings, and following his first replies up by others to allay their fervour, or as the Persians have it, 'eating his words.' But the Greek Committee were not to be fobbed off; they resolved to have him on any terms, so they assented to all he suggested. The official style of the documents sent by the committee, the great seal and the prodigality of wax and diplomatic phrases, as well as the importance attached to his name, and the great events predicted from his personal exertions, tickled the Poet's fancy,—and moreover they lauded and my-lorded him to his heart's content.

> With as little a web as this, will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio.

The negotiation with the committee occupied some months before Byron, perplexed in the extreme, finally committed himself. He might well hesitate. It would have been difficult to find a man more unfit for such an enterprise; but he had a great name, and that was all the committee required. The marvel was that he lent it. Moore, Byron's biographer, suggests that he embarked in this crusade to rekindle his mental light and failing popularity, whereas the chronology of his works proves that his mental powers waxed stronger as he grew older, and that his last poems were his best. That envy, malice, and hatred be-dogged his steps, snarling

and snapping, is true, but neither his power nor popularity had declined, nor did he think so. In after years, on my talking with the late Mr. Murray, his publisher, on this subject, he said, 'I observed no falling off in his Lordship's powers or popularity during the latter period of his life, quite the reverse; but I heard such general censures on him from literary and other people who frequented my shop, and they spoke in such a depreciating tone of his later writings, that I became greatly alarmed as his publisher; and as I entertained a warm personal regard for his Lordship, I lightly touched on the subject in my letters to him. I was a great fool for so doing, for Mr. Giffard, the ablest scholar of them all, and one who did not throw his words away, as well as a few men of the same stamp, occasionally dropped remarks which satisfied me I had done wrong in alluding to the subject, for it was after reading the latter cantos of *Don Juan* that Mr. Giffard said—

'"Upon my soul, I do not know where to place Byron. I think we can't find a niche for him unless we go back and place him after Shakspeare and Milton"—after a pause—"there is no other place for him."'

I observed to Murray that Moore had only seen Byron in society; his Life of his brother Bard was a mystification; his comments might be considered very eloquent as a rhapsody, if they had been spoken over the Poet's grave, but they give no idea of the individuality of the man.

'The most valuable parts of Moore's Life are the letters addressed to you,' I continued; 'and as they were designed for publication, you should have printed them with his prose works.'

Murray replied, 'You are quite right. If ever a statute of lunacy is taken out against me, it must be

on the plea of my mad agreement with Moore for Byron's Life, by which I lost credit, and a great deal of money; but it is not too late to redeem my error so far as the public is concerned; rather than leave it as it is I will get Lockhart, or somebody else, to do the thing as it should be done.'

I have been seduced into this digression to show from what a small squad of malignants came the cry of Byron's failing powers and popularity.

In December, 1822, I laid up the Poet's pleasure-boat, paid off the crew, retaining the first mate in my service as a groom, and early in the following year, 1823, started on horseback—with the aforesaid sailor, mounted, to act as tender,—to take a cruize inland. So during Byron's negotiation with the Greek Committee, and Blaquiere's visit to Albaro, I was absent, but being apprised of what was going on I was not surprised when in Rome at receiving the following note:—

June 15, 1823.

My dear T.

You must have heard that I am going to Greece. Why do you not come to me? I want your aid, and am exceedingly anxious to see you. Pray come, for I am at last determined to go to Greece; it is the only place I was ever contented in. I am serious, and did not write before, as I might have given you a journey for nothing; they all say I can be of use in Greece. I do not know how, nor do they; but at all events let us go.

Yours, &c., truly,

N. Byron.

To show Byron's vacillating state of mind, I quote some passages from letters I received at that time.

Captain Roberts, in a letter dated May 26, 1823, Genoa, says, 'Between you and me, I think, there is small chance of Byron's going to Greece; so I think from the wavering manner in which he speaks of it; he said the other day, "Well, Captain, if we do not go to Greece, I am determined to go somewhere, and hope we shall all be at sea together by next month, as I am tired of this place, the shore. and all the people on it."'

Ten days after, in a letter dated the 5th June, Roberts writes me:

'Byron has sold the *Bolivar* to Lord Blessington for four hundred guineas, and is determined to go to Greece: he says, whilst he was in doubt, fearing it might prove a reality, he did not like to bring you here; now, he wishes much to see you to have your opinion as to what steps it will be most necessary to take. I have been on board several vessels with him; as yet he has not decided on any of them. I think he would find it answer, now he has sold the schooner, to buy the three-masted clipper we saw at Leghorn, to refit and arm her, as I am much of your way of thinking, for a big gun or two, and legs to run and wings to pursue, as the case may be, for the Greek waters are pestered with pirates. I have written by his desire to Dunn about her; if you come here by way of Leghorn, pray overhaul her, and then you will be able to give him your opinion. I think she will do excellently well, except the accommodation—the cabin is small. He has asked me to be of the party.'

Four days after I had received the above, Mrs. Shelley having just seen Byron, wrote me from Genoa, June 9th:

'Lord Byron says, that as he has not heard from Greece, his going there is uncertain; but if he

does go, he is extremely desirous that you should join him, and if you will continue to let him know where you may be found, he will inform you as soon as he comes to any decision.'

This was not the last of Byron's counter-messages to me, besides commissions which I was urged instantly to execute; knowing him, I took no heed nor made any preparations until he wrote me that he had chartered a vessel. On the 22nd I received this note from him:

DEAR T.

I have engaged a vessel (now on her way to Leghorn to unload), and on her return to Genoa we embark. She is called the *Hercules*; you can come back in her, if you like, it will save you a land journey. I need not say I shall like your company of all things. I want a surgeon, native or foreign, to take charge of medical stores, and be in personal attendance. Salary, a hundred pounds a year, and his treatment at our table, as a companion and a gentleman. He must have recommendations, of course. Could you look out for me? Perhaps you can consult Vacca, to whom I have written on the same subject; we are, however, pressed for time a little. I expect you with impatience, and am ever yours,

N. B.

Byron's letters to his literary allies were written carefully, expressly to be shown about. He said, on seeing the word *private* on a letter, 'That will insure its becoming public. If I really wish mine to be private, I say things that my correspondents don't wish divulged.' When he wrote on the spur of the moment his letters were often obscure and peevish; if he gave them me to read, and I told him they

would offend, he would rewrite them still more offensively. Omitting his more lengthy scrawls, as they would require tedious notes to explain them, I give two or three short samples of his ordinary natural style.

On his hearing that a naval officer of the *Despatch* sloop of war had boarded his boat at Leghorn, and taken away her pennant, he wrote to me:

Pisa, August 10, 1822.

Dear T.

I always foresaw and told you that they would take every opportunity of annoying me in every respect. If you get American papers and permission to sail under their flag, I shall be very glad, and should much prefer it, but I doubt that it will be very difficult.

Yours,

N. B.

Byron had a dispute with Captain Roberts on a very frivolous subject; he sent me a letter to forward to the Captain; I refused to forward it, saying it would not do, on which he wrote me the following.

Genoa, 9*m*. 28*d*. 1822.

My dear T.

I enclose you a letter from, and another to, Captain R., which may be more to your taste, but at any rate it contains all that I have to say on the subject; you will, I presume, write and inclose it or not, according to your own opinion [it was one of his long-winded offensive epistles, so I did not send it]. I repeat that I have no wish for a quarrel, but if it comes unlooked for, it must be received accord-

ingly. I recognise no right in any man to interfere between me and men in my pay, of whose conduct I have the best right to judge.

Yours, ever and afterwards,

N. B.

9th Month, 21d. 1822.

MY DEAR T.

Thank you, I was just going to send you down some books, and the compass of the *Don Juan*, which I believe belongs to Captain Roberts; if there is anything of yours on board the *Bolivar*, let me know, that I may send it or keep it for you. I don't know how our account stands; you will let me know if there is any balance due to you that I may pay it. I am willing to make any agreement with a proper person in the arsenal to look after her, and also to have the rigging deposited in a safe place. I have given the boy and one of the men their clothes, and if Mr. Beeze had been civil, and Frost honest, I should not have been obliged to go so near the wind with them. But I hate bothering you with these things. I agree with you in your parting sentence, and hope we shall have better luck another time. There is one satisfaction, however, which is, that the displeasures have been rather occasioned by untoward circumstances, and not by the disposition of any party concerned. But such are human things even in little; we would hardly have had more plague with a first-rate. No news of any kind from England, which don't look well.

Yours, ever and truly,

N. B.

This referred to a threatened prosecution of his 'Vision of Judgement,' which had been published in Hunt's *Liberal*.

CHAPTER XVI

He passed forth, and new adventure sought;
Long way he travelled before he heard of aught.

Faery Queene.

Forwarding my traps to Leghorn, I was soon on the road to Genoa. My sailor groom had returned to his family, and I engaged an American born negro to fill his place. In Italy, I invariably travelled on horseback. The distances from one town to another are short, the scenery is varied, and the climate beautiful; besides, Italy is peculiarly adapted to this slow, yet only way of thoroughly seeing a country. Most travellers fly through in a string, like a flock of wild geese, merely alighting at the great cities. As the weather was hot and the days long, we started every morning at four or five o'clock, and jogged along until ten or eleven, then pulled up at town, village, or solitary locanda, or in default of these, looked out for a wood, dell, ruin, or other place that promised shade and water. Then dismounting we fed our horses from nose-bags, made up a fire, boiled coffee, breakfasted off such things as we had brought with us, smoked our pipes and fell asleep. Our provender was carried by the black, in old fashioned saddle-bags. In that fine climate our wants were so few, that they provided ample stowage room. I had two excellent Hungarian cavalry horses, bought from an Austrian colonel. Our usual day's travel was from thirty-five to forty-five miles; the best half of the distance we always accomplished before breakfast, so that our day's journey was com-

pleted at four or five in the evening, and every day both horses and men improved in condition. If there is any healthier or pleasanter way of life than this, I can only say, I have never enjoyed it.

However long the journey, it was never tedious, and I always regretted its termination. I stopped two days at Florence, and then shaped my course for the sea-board, through Massa and Rapallo, Sarzana, Lerici and Spezzia, on which coast everything was familiar to me, and associated with the memories of my lost friends Shelley and Williams. My horses stopped at their accustomed locandas, and many familiar faces came out to welcome me.

I arrived early at Lerici, and determined to sleep there, and finish my journey to Genoa on the following day. In the evening, I walked to the Villa Magni, where the Shelleys had last lived, and the ground-floor having neither door nor window, I walked in. Shelley's shattered skiff in which he used to go adventuring, as he termed it, in rivers and canals, was still there: in that little flat-bottomed boat he had written many beautiful things,—

Our boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,
The sails are furled like thoughts in a dream,
The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
And the oars and the sail: but 'tis sleeping fast.

And here it was, sleeping still on the mud floor, with its mast and oars broken. I mounted the stairs or rather ladder into the dining-room they had lived in, for this and four small bedrooms was all the space they had. As I surveyed its splatchy walls, broken floor, cracked ceiling, and poverty-struck appearance, while I noted the loneliness of the situation, and remembered the fury of the waves

that in blowing weather lashed its walls, I did not marvel at Mrs. Shelley's and Mrs. Williams's groans on first entering it; nor that it had required all Ned Williams's persuasive powers to induce them to stop there. We men had only looked at the sea and scenery, and would have been satisfied with a tent. But women look to a house as their empire. Ladies without a drawing-room are like pictures without frames, or birds without feathers; knowing this, they set to work with a will, and transformed it into a very pleasant abode.

One of the customs of the natives of this bay reminded me of the South Sea Islanders. At sunset the whole population of men, women, and children, took to the water, sporting in it for hours like wild ducks; we occasionally did the same, Shelley especially delighting in the sport. His wife looked grave, and said 'it was improper.' Shelley protested vehemently against the arbitrary power of the word, saying, 'Hush Mary, that insidious word has never been echoed by these woods and rocks: don't teach it them. It was one of the words my fellow serpent whispered into Eve's ear, and when I hear it, I wish I was far away on some lone island, with no other inhabitants than seals, sea-birds and water-rats.' Then turning to his friend, he continued, 'At Pisa, Mary said a jacket was not proper, because others did not wear them, and here it's not proper to bathe, because every body does. Oh! what shall we do.'

The next day I started at daylight for Genoa, and when I came near Albaro, I sent my horses to the city, and walked to the Casa Saluzzi; of which all the doors and windows were open, as is usual, in Italian country houses during summer evenings. I walked in, and as I did not see any of Byron's people, I looked into five or six of the fifty or sixty rooms,

which the palace contained, before I found the Pilgrim's penetralia: he was so deeply absorbed that he did not hear my steps. There he sat with a pen in his hand and papers before him, with a painfully perplexed expression and heated brow, such as an inspired Pythoness might have had on her tripod. I thought it a sacrilege to profane his sanctuary, and was hesitating whether I should retreat or advance, when his bull-dog Moretto came in from the hall: so I spoke to the dog.

Byron recognising my voice, sprang up with his usual alacrity and shook my hand with unusual warmth. After a hasty chat, he halloed out lustily for his servants, for there were no bells: he was going out of the room, saying, 'You must be hungry, we will see what there is in the house.'

I assured him I was not, and that I could not stop, as I wished to see Mrs. Shelley and the Leigh Hunts.

'Aye, aye,' he observed, 'they are flesh-eaters—you scorn my lenten fare, but come back soon, I will dispatch my salad and sardines, and then we will discuss a bottle of hock, and talk over matters; I have a great deal to tell you, but I must first balance these cursed bills; I have been an hour poring over this one you found me at, and my *tottle* don't square with Legá; in the time thus lost I might have written half a canto of *Don Juan*—and the amount of the bill is only one hundred and forty-three lire, which is not six pounds. In cases of lunacy, the old demon Eldon decided men's sanity by figures; if I had been had up before him (I was very near being so), and he had given me the simplest sum in arithmetic, I should have been consigned to durance vile—

For the rule of three it puzzles me,
And practice drives me mad.'

In about an hour and a half I returned to the Casa Saluzzi, and found the Poet, still hard at work on his weekly bills: he observed archly, 'I have found out in another account of the steward's, that he has cheated himself; that is his affair, not mine.' This put him in good humour, so he gathered up the scattered accounts and put them away. He then read me his correspondence with the Greek Committee, or rather the last portion of it, and a letter from Blaquiere, from Greece, and told me what he thought of doing. Promising to see Byron the following day, I left him and walked to my locanda at Genoa. It was plain enough from what I had just seen, that with regard to money, his mind had undergone no change. He thought he was in honour bound to go to Zante to meet Blaquiere—the rest seemed to depend on blind chance. The Committee suggested no definite plan, nor could he form one.

Mental as well as physical diseases are hereditary. Byron's arrogant temper he inherited, his penurious habits were instilled into him by his mother; he was reared in poverty and obscurity and unexpectedly became a Lord, with a good estate: this was enough to unsettle the equanimity of such a temperament as his. But fortune as well as misfortune comes with both hands full, and when, as he himself said, he awoke one morning and found himself famous, his brain grew dizzy, and he foolishly entered the great donkey sweepstakes, and ran in the ruck with his long-eared compeers—galled in the race, he bolted off the course, and rushed into the ranks of that great sect that worships golden images. If you come too near the improvident or the reckless, there is danger of being engulfed in the vortex they create, whereas with the thrifty, you

may do well enough. Thus ruminating, I reached my inn, the Croce di Malta.

The next day Byron called, he wished me to go on board the brig he had chartered—the *Hercules*, Capt. Scott,—to see her equipments and accommodations, and report thereon. I did so, and was very much dissatisfied. She was a collier-built tub of 120 tons, round-bottomed, and bluff-bowed, and of course, a dull sailer, with the bulk-heads, the horse-boxes, and other fittings newly put up, ill-contrived, and scamped by the contractor. The captain, one of the rough old John Bull stamp, was well enough—the mate better, and no fault to be found with the crew, but that they were too few in number. For such an expedition we should have had a well-manned and fast-sailing clipper-built craft, adapted to the light winds and summer seas prevailing in the Greek Archipelago, so that after calling at the Ionian Islands, we could have used her as a yacht, run over to the Morea, touching at several ports not blockaded by the Turks, and ascertained the exact state of the war, its wants, capabilities, and more especially, the characters of those who conducted it. We might then have exacted conditions before committing ourselves to any specific line of action. Under the English flag, this and much more might have been done. On saying this to Byron, he answered—

'There was no other vessel than the *Hercules* to be had at Genoa.'

'Leghorn is the place for shipping,' said I.

'Why, then, did you not come here sooner? I had no one to help me.'

'You had Captain Roberts, the very man for the occasion; we might as well have built a raft and so chanced it.'

Then smiling, he replied, 'they say I have got her on very easy terms.'

'Aye, but the time she will be on her voyage will make her a bad bargain; she will take a week to drift to Leghorn, and it should be done in twenty hours.'

'We must make the best of it. I will pay her off at the Ionian Islands, and stop there until I see my way, for here we can learn nothing. Blaquiere is to meet me at Zante by appointment, and he is now in the Morea.'

CHAPTER XVII

Awak'ning with a start!
The waters heave around me: and on high
The winds lift up their voices: I depart,
Whither I know not.

Childe Harold.

On July 13, 1823, we shipped the horses, four of Byron's, and one of mine, and in the evening, Byron, Gamba, and an unfledged medical student with five or six servants embarked. I and my negro completed the complement. On my observing to Byron the Doctor would be of no use, as he had seen no practice, he answered, 'If he knows little I pay little, and we will find him plenty of work.' The next day it was a dead calm, so we re-landed; on the 15th we weighed anchor at daylight, several American ships in compliment to Byron, sending their boats to tow us out of the bay, but made very little progress; we lay in the offing all day like a log upon the main under a broiling sun,—the Italians skipping about, gesticulating, and chattering like wild monkeys in a wood. The Pilgrim sat apart, solemn and sad,—he took no notice of anything nor spoke a word. At midnight the sea breeze set in and quickly freshened, so we shortened sail and hauled our wind. As soon as the old tub began to play at pitch and toss, the noisy Italians, with the exception of the Venetian gondolier, Baptista, crept into holes and corners in consternation. The horses kicked down their flimsy partitions, and my black groom and I had to secure them, while the sea got up and the wind increased. I told Byron,

that we must bear up for port, or we should lose our cattle—'Do as you like', he said. So we bore up, and after a rough night, re-anchored in our former berth; as the sun rose the wind died away, and one by one the land-lubbers crawled on deck. Byron having remained all night on deck, laughed at the miserable figure they cut; they all went on shore, and I set to work with two or three English carpenters to repair damages.

In the evening we took a fresh departure, and the weather continuing fine, we had no other delay than that which arose from the bad sailing qualities of our vessel. We were five days on our passage to Leghorn, not averaging more than twenty miles a day. We all messed and most of us slept, on deck. Byron unusually silent and serious, was generally during the day reading Scott's *Life of Swift*, Col. Hippesley's *Expedition to South America*, Grimm's *Correspondence*, or *Rochefoucault*. This was his usual style of reading on shore. We were two days at Leghorn completing our sea stores. A Mr. Hamilton Brown and two Greeks, who had previously applied to Byron for a passage, came on board. One of the Greeks called himself Prince Shilizzi, the other, Vitaili, assumed no higher rank than Captain. The friends who accompanied them on board, whispered me to be wary of them, asserting that the Prince was a Russian spy, and the Captain in the interests of the Turks. This was our first sample of the morality of the modern Greeks. On my telling this to Byron, he merely said, 'and a fair sample too of the ancient as well as modern, if Mitford is to be believed.'

Our Scotch passenger, with no other handle to his name than plain Mr. Hamilton Brown, was an acquisition; he had been in office in the Ionian

Islands, spoke Italian and Romaic, and knew a good deal of the Greeks, as well as the characters of the English residents in command of the Islands. From what we learnt from him we altered our plan, and instead of Zante decided on going to Cephalonia, as Sir C. J. Napier was in command there, and the only man in office favourably disposed to the Greeks and their cause. We remained two days at Leghorn completing our stores. I don't remember that Byron went on shore more than once, and then only to settle his accounts with his agent Webb. As we were getting under weigh, my friend Grant came on board, and gave Byron the latest English papers, Reviews, and the first volume of Las Cases' *Memoirs of Napoleon*, just out. On July 23, 1823, we put to sea in the finest possible weather; drifting leisurely along the Italian coast, we sighted Piombino, a town in the midst of the pestilential lagoons of the Maremma famous for its wild fowl and fevers; a dark line of jungle fringed the shore for many leagues; we crossed the mouth of the muddy Tiber; saw the Alban Mount, and Mount Soracte, the landmarks which point out the site of Rome. On coming near Lonza, a small islet, converted into one of their many dungeons by the Neapolitan government, I said to Byron,

'There is a sight that would curdle the milky blood of a poet-laureate.'

'If Southey was here,' he answered, 'he would sing hosannas to the Bourbons. Here kings and governors are only the jailors and hangmen of the detestable Austrian barbarians. What dolts and drivellers the people are to submit to such universal despotism. I should like to see, from this our ark, the world submerged, and all the rascals on it drowning like rats.'

I put a pencil and paper in his hand, saying,

'Perpetuate your curses on tyranny, for poets like ladies generally side with the despots.'

He readily took the paper and set to work. I walked the deck and prevented his being disturbed. He looked as crest-fallen as a riotous boy, suddenly pounced upon by a master and given an impossible task, scrawling and scratching out, sadly perplexed. After a long spell, he said,

'You think it is as easy to write poetry as smoke a segar,—look, it's only doggerel. Extemporising verses is nonsense; poetry is a distinct faculty,—it won't come when called,—you may as well whistle for a wind; a Pythoness was primed when put upon her tripod. I must chew the cud before I write. I have thought over most of my subjects for years before writing a line.'

He did not, however, give up the task, and sat pondering over the paper for nearly an hour; then gnashing his teeth, he tore up what he had written, and threw the fragments overboard.

Seeing I looked disappointed—

'You might as well ask me to describe an earthquake, whilst the ground was trembling under my feet. Give me time,—I can't forget the theme: but for this Greek business I should have been at Naples writing a fifth canto of *Childe Harold*, expressly to give vent to my detestation of the Austrian tyranny in Italy.'

Sometime after, I suggested he should write a war song for the Greeks; he did so afterwards. I saw the original amongst his papers at Missolonghi, and made a copy of it which I have lost. Proceeding on our voyage, it was not until we had been some days fairly at sea, with no land to look back upon, that the Pilgrim regained something of his self-

command,—he may have felt the truth of the old song—

> Now we're in for it, dam'ee what folly, boys,
> To be downhearted, yo ho.

His sadness intermitted, and his cold fits alternated with hot ones. Hitherto he had taken very little notice of anything, and when he talked it was with an effort. The lonely and grim-looking island of Stromboli was the first object that riveted his attention; it was shrouded in the smoke from its eternal volcanic fires, and the waves rolling into the deep caverns at its base, boomed dismally. A poet might have compared it to the bellowings of imprisoned demons.

Our Captain told us a story at night. It was an old tale told by all Levant sailors, and they are not particular as to names and dates.

'That a ship from the port of London was lying off this island loading with sulphur, when her Captain, who was on shore superintending the men, distinctly saw Alderman Curtis,—'

'Not Alderman Curtis,' shouted Byron, 'but cut-throat Castlereagh!'

'Whoever it was, my Lord,' continued the Skipper, 'he was walking round and round the edge of the burning crater; his mate and crew were witnesses of the same; and when the vessel returned to England they heard that the person they had seen was dead; and the time of his death tallied exactly with the above event, as entered in the ship's log-book.'

Byron, taking up the yarn-spinning, said—

'Monk Lewis told me, that he took lodgings at Weimar in Germany, and that every morning he was awakened by a rustling noise, as of quantities

of papers being torn open and eagerly handled; the noise came from a closet joining his room; he several times got out of bed and looked into it, but there was no one there. At length he told the servant of the house: the man said, "Don't you know the house is haunted? It belonged formerly to a lady; she had an only son, he left her and went to sea, and the ship was never heard of,—but the mother still believed he would return, and passed all her time in reading foreign newspapers, of which the closet was full; and when she died, at the same hour every morning, in that closet, her spirit is heard frantically tearing open papers."

'Monk Lewis,' added Byron, 'though so fond of a ghost story, was not superstitious, he believed nothing. Once at a dinner party he said to me, across the table, "Byron, what did you mean by calling me Apollo's sexton in your English Bards?" I was so taken aback I could not answer him, nor could I now. Now, Tre,' he said, 'it's your turn to spin a yarn.'

'I will tell you one of presentiment,' I said, 'for you believe in that.'

'Certainly, I do,' he rejoined.

'The Captain of Lord Keith's ship, when she was lying at Leghorn, was on a visit to Signor Felleichi, at Pisa; the Captain was of a very gay and talkative turn; suddenly he became silent and sad; his host asked if he was ill? he said "No, I wish I was on board my ship; I feel as if I was going to be hanged." At last he was persuaded to go to bed; but, before he got to his room, an express arrived with the news that his ship was on fire. He instantly posted to Leghorn, went on board, worked his ship out of the harbour to avoid perilling the other vessels lying there, but in spite of great

exertion the fire reached the magazine, and every soul perished. A little middy on shore at Leghorn, with a heart as great as his Captain's, gave a boatman a draft on Signor Felleichi for sixty pounds, to put him alongside his ship.'

The Poet had an antipathy to everything scientific; maps and charts offended him; he would not look through a spy-glass, and only knew the cardinal points of the compass; buildings the most ancient or modern he was as indifferent to as he was to painting, sculpture, and music. But all natural objects, and changes in the elements, he was generally the first to point out and the last to lose sight of. We lay-to all night off Stromboli; Byron sat up watching it. As he went down to his cabin at day-light, he said—

'If I live another year, you will see this scene in a fifth canto of *Childe Harold*.'

In the morning we entered the narrow strait of Messina, passed close by the precipitous promontory of Scylla, and at the distance of a mile on the opposite shore, Charybdis; the waters were boiling and lashed into foam and whirlpools by the conflicting currents and set of the sea; in bad weather it is dangerous to approach too near in small craft. The Poet had returned to his usual post by the taffrail; and soon after Messina was spread out before us, with its magnificent harbour, quays, and palaces; it was a gorgeous sight, and the surrounding scenery was so diversified and magnificent, that I exclaimed—

'Nature must have intended this for Paradise.'

'But the devil,' observed the Poet, 'has converted it into Hell.'

After some deliberation, the wind blowing fresh and fair, we reluctantly passed the city, and scudded

through the Straits along the grim and rugged shores of Calabria; at 2 p.m. we got into the vortex of another whirlpool, and the conflicting winds, currents, and waves contending for mastery, held us captive. Our vessel was unmanageable, and there we lay oscillating like a pendulum for two hours close to the rocks, seeing vessels half-a-mile from us scudding by under double reefed topsails. The spell broken, we resumed our course. On passing a fortress called the Pharo, in the narrowest part of the Strait, we had a good view of Mount Etna, with its base wreathed in mists, while the summit stood out in bold relief against the sky. To the east we had the savage shores of Calabria, with its gray and jagged rocks; to the west the sunny and fertile coast of Sicily,—gliding close by its smooth hills and sheltered coves, Byron would point to some serene nook, and exclaim, 'There I could be happy!'

CHAPTER XVIII

But let it go—it will one day be found
With other relics of 'a former world,'
When this world shall be *former* underground,
Thrown topsy-turvy, twisted, crisp'd, and curl'd,
Baked, fried, and burnt, turn'd inside out or drown'd.

Don Juan.

It was now the 30th of July, twelve days since our departure from Genoa, our ship would do anything but go a-head, she was built on the lines of a baby's cradle, and the least touch of Neptune's foot set her rocking. I was glad of this, for it kept all the land-lubbers in their cribs. Byron was not at all affected by the motion, he improved amazingly in health and spirits, and said, 'On shore when I awake in the morning, I am always inclined to hang myself, as the day advances, I get better, and at midnight I am all cock-a-whoop. I am better now than I have been for years.' You never know a man's temper until you have been imprisoned in a ship with him, or a woman's until you have married her. Few friendships can stand the ordeal by water; when a yacht from England with a pair of these thus tried friends touches,—say at Malta or Gibraltar,—you may be sure that she will depart with one only. I never was on shipboard with a better companion than Byron, he was generally cheerful, gave no trouble, assumed no authority, uttered no complaints, and did not interfere with the working of the ship; when appealed to, he always answered, 'do as you like.' Everyday at noon, he and I jumped overboard in

defiance of sharks or weather; it was the only exercise he had, for he could not walk the deck. His favourite toys—pistols, were not forgotten; empty bottles and live poultry served as targets; a fowl, duck or goose, was put into a basket, the head and neck only visible, hoisted to the main yard-arm: and we rarely had two shots at the same bird. No boy cornet enjoyed a practical joke more than Byron. On great occasions when our Captain wished to be grand, he wore a bright scarlet waistcoat; as he was very corpulent, Byron wished to see if this vest would not button round us both. The captain was taking his siesta one day, when he persuaded the boy to bring up the waistcoat. In the mean time, as it was nearly calm and very hot, I opened the coops of the geese and ducks, who instinctively took to the water. Neptune, the Newfoundland dog, jumped after them, and Moretto the bull-dog, followed him.

'Now,' said Byron, standing on the gangway, with one arm in the red waistcoat, 'put your arm in, Tre, we will jump overboard, and take the shine out of it.'

So we did.

The captain hearing the row on deck, came up, and when he saw the gorgeous garment he was so proud of, defiled by sea water, he roared out, 'My Lord, you should know better than to make a mutiny on board ship, [the crew were laughing at the fun,] I won't heave to, or lower a boat, I hope you will both be drowned.'

'Then you will lose your *frite*,' (for so the Captain always pronounced the word freight,) shouted Byron.

As I saw the dogs worrying the ducks and geese, I returned on board with the waistcoat, pacified the skipper, lowered a boat, and with the aid of a boy, sculled after the birds and beasts; the Newfound-

lander brought them to us unharmed, but Moretto the bull-dog did not mouth them so tenderly. After the glare and oppressive heat of the day, the evenings and nights were delightful: balmy air, no dew, and light enough to distinguish everything near.

Fletcher, Byron's 'yeoman bold,' as was his custom in the afternoon, was squatted under the lee of the caboose, eating his supper, and drinking bottled porter which he dearly loved. I said, 'You are enjoying yourself, Fletcher.'

'Yes,' he answered, 'and you had better do so whilst you can: my master can't be right in his mind.'

'Why?' I asked.

'If he was, he would not have left Italy, where we had everything, and go to a country of savages; there is nothing to eat in Greece, but tough Billy Goats, or to drink, but spirits of turpentine. Why, sir, there is nothing there but rocks, robbers, and vermin.'—Seeing his master coming up the companion ladder, he raised his voice—'I defy my Lord to deny it—you may ask him.'

'I don't deny it,' said Byron; 'what he says is quite true to those who take a hog's-eye view of things. But this I know, I have never been so happy as I was there; how it will be with me, now that my head is as gray, and my heart as hard, as the rocks, I can't say.'

I followed Fletcher's advice and example in regard to the supper, and the Poet, saying he could not resist temptation, joined me. We discussed the pleasures and independence of sea-life as contrasted with the eternal restraint and botheration on shore. Here, I observed, we have only the elements to contend with, and a safe port under our lee, whereas on shore we never know what mischief is brewing; a

letter, or the idle gossip of a good-natured friend, stops our digestion—how smoothly the time glides on, now we are out of the reach of men and mischief-makers.

'Women, you should say,' exclaimed Byron; 'if we had a womankind on board, she would set us all at loggerheads, and make a mutiny, would she not, Captain?'

'I wish my old woman was here,' replied the skipper, 'she would make you as comfortable in my cabin at sea, as your own wife could in her parlour on shore.'

Byron started and looked savage—the Captain went on, as unconscious of offending as a cart-horse would be, after crushing your toes with his hoof. 'My wife,' he continued, 'on my last voyage from Rio, saved my ship. We had touched there for water, homeward bound: she waked me up at night,—her weather eye was always open,—the men were *desarting* in a crimp's shore-boat. In the morning it came on to blow like blazes.'

'If we are to have a yarn, Captain, we must have strong waters.'

'I have no objection to a glass of grog,' said the Captain; 'I am not a temperance man, but I can't *abide* drunkenness at sea. I like to have my allowance.'

'How much is that?' asked Byron.

'No more than will do me good.'

'How much is that?'

'Why, a bottle of good old Jamaica rum sarves me from 11 a.m. till 10 p.m., and I know that can't hurt any man.'

Byron read a critique on O'Meara's 'Napoleon at St. Helena,' in the *Quarterly*. He remarked, 'If all they assert is true, it only affects the character of

the author. They do not disprove a single statement in the book: this is their way! If they crush an author, it must be in the shell, as they tried to do with me: if the book has life enough to outlive the year, it defies their malice—for who reads a last year's review? Whilst our literature is domineered over by a knot of virulent bigots and rancorous partisans, we shall have no great or original works. When did parsons patronise genius? If one of their black band dares to think for himself, he is drummed out, or cast aside, like Sterne and Swift. Where are the great poets and writers the Reviewers predicted were to be the leviathans of our literature? Extinct: their bones hereafter may be grubbed up in a fossil state with those of the reptiles that puffed them into life. If this age has produced anything good or great, which I doubt, it has been under every possible discouragement.

'People say that I have told my own story in my writings: I defy them to point out a single act of my life by my poems, or of my thoughts, for I seldom write what I think. All that has been published about me is sheer nonsense, as will be seen at my death, when my real life is published: everything in that is true. When I first left England I was gloomy. I said so in my first canto of *Childe Harold*. I was then really in love with a cousin (Thirza, he was very chary of her name), and she was in a decline. On my last leaving England I was savage; there was enough to make me so. There is some truth as to detail in the 'Dream,' and in some of my shorter poems. As to my marriage, which people made such ridiculous stories about, it was managed by Lady Jersey and others. I was perfectly indifferent on the subject; thought I could not do better, and so did they. I wanted money

It was an experiment, and proved a failure. Everything is told in my memoirs exactly as it happened. I told Murray Lady Byron was to read the MS. if she wished it, and requested she would add, omit, or make any comments she pleased, now, or when it was going through the press.'

It is strange that Byron, though professing to distrust everybody, should have had no misgiving as to the fate of his memoirs; he was glad Moore sold them to Murray, as he thought that ensured publication. He considered it indispensable to his honour that the truths he could not divulge during his life should be known at his death. He knew Moore prided himself on his intimacy with lords and ladies, for he was always talking of them, and that the chief aim and object of that Poet's whole life was pleasure at any price. Had he fulfilled his trust by giving Byron's memoirs to the world, he would have compromised himself with society, as they contained many a reminiscence which would have cast a shadow on the fashionable circles which Tom Moore delighted to honour. When the question was raised after Byron's death, of the publication or suppression of his memoirs, his friend Tom Moore acted as if he was quite indifferent on the subject; so he must have been, for although he permitted others to read them, he never found time to do so himself. He consulted the most fashionable man he knew on the subject, Lutterell, who, as Rogers says, 'cared nothing about the matter, and readily voted they should be put in the fire.' Byron said, 'some few scenes and names in his memoirs it might be necessary to omit, as he had written the whole truth. Moore and Murray were to exercise their own discretion on that subject.' He added, 'that the truth would be known and believed when he was dead, and

the lies forgotten.' So there is nothing to extenuate the great wrong done to Byron by Tom Moore.

Byron's autobiography contained a narrative of the principal events of his life; with running comments on those he came in contact with, or who crossed his path. It was written in a straightforward, manly manner, and in a vigorous, fearless style, and was apparently truthful as regarded himself;—if it was not the whole truth, it contained much more of that commodity than other writers have generally left us in their memoirs. Autobiography was the kind of reading he preferred to all others.

CHAPTER XIX

His life was one long war with self-sought foes,
Or friends by him self-banished, for his mind
Had grown Suspicion's sanctuary.

Childe Harold.

Byron formed his opinion of the inhabitants of this planet from books; personally he knew as little about them as if he belonged to some other. From reading Rochefoucauld, Machiavelli, and other soured cynics, he learnt to distrust people in general; so, as he could do nothing without them and did not know how to manage them, he was always complaining of being over-reached, and never getting what he wanted. I don't think he ever knew what he did want: few there are that do.

To resume my log on board the good ship *Hercules*. On the 2nd of August, the islands of Cephalonia and Zante were in sight, and shortly after Byron pointing out the Morea said, 'I don't know why it is, but I feel as if the eleven long years of bitterness I have passed through since I was here, were taken off my shoulders, and I was scudding through the Greek Archipelago with old Bathurst, in his frigate.' That night we anchored in the road-stead; the next morning we worked into Argostoli, the harbour of Cephalonia, and anchored near the town. An officer from the Health Office having examined our papers and log, gave us pratique. The secretary of the Resident, Captain Kennedy, came on board; he told us Colonel Napier was absent, but that we might depend on the Colonel's

readiness to aid us in anything that his orders to observe strict neutrality permitted. The captain gave us the latest news from the seat of war, and said Blacquiere had gone to England, at which Byron was sorely vexed. The truth flashed across his mind, that he had been merely used as a decoy by the committee. 'Now they have got me thus far they think I must go on, and they care nothing as to the result. They are deceived, I won't budge a foot farther until I see my way; we will stay here; if that is objected to, I will buy an island from the Greeks or Turks; there must be plenty of them in the market.' The instinct that enables the vulture to detect carrion afar off, is surpassed by the marvellous acuteness of the Greeks in scenting money. The morning after our arrival a flock of ravenous Zuliote refugees alighted on our decks, attracted by Byron's dollars. Lega, the steward, a thorough miser, coiled himself on the money-chest like a viper. Our sturdy skipper was for driving them overboard with hand-spikes. Byron came on deck in exuberant spirits, pleased with their savage aspect and wild attire, and, as was his wont, promised a great deal more than he should have done; day and night they clung to his heels like a pack of jackals, till he stood at bay like a hunted lion, and was glad to buy them off, by shipping them to the Morea. On Colonel Napier's return to the island, he warmly urged Byron, and indeed all of us, to take up our quarters at his house; from first to last, all the English on the island, the military as well as the civilians, vied with each other in friendly and hospitable acts. Byron preferred staying on board; every afternoon he and I crossed the harbour in a boat, and landed on a rock to bathe; on one of these occasions he held out his right leg to me, saying,

'I hope this accursed limb will be knocked off in the war.'

'It won't improve your swimming,' I answered; 'I will exchange legs if you will give me a portion of your brains.'

'You would repent your bargain,' he said; 'at times I feel my brains boiling, as Shelley's did whilst you were grilling him.'

After bathing, we landed in an olive grove, eating our frugal supper under the trees. Our Greek passengers during the voyage said, that the Greeks generally were in favour of a monarchical government; the Greeks on the island confirmed this, saying it was the only way of getting rid of the robber chiefs who now tyrannised and kept the country in a state of anarchy; and as they must have a foreigner for a king, they could not do better than elect Byron. The Poet treated this suggestion lightly, saying, 'If they make me the offer, I may not refuse it. I shall take care of my own "sma peculiar;" for if it don't suit my humour, I shall, like Sancho, abdicate.' Byron several times alluded to this, in a bantering vein; it left an impression on his mind. Had he lived to reach the congress of Salona as commissioner of the loan, the dispenser of a million silver crowns would have been offered a golden one.

Our party made an excursion to the neighbouring island of Ithaca; contrasted with the arid wastes and barren red hills of Cephalonia, the verdant valleys, sparkling streams, and high land, clothed in evergreen shrubs, were strikingly beautiful. After landing, it was proposed to Byron to visit some of the localities that antiquaries have dubbed with the titles of Homer's school,—Ulysses' stronghold, &c.: he turned peevishly away, saying to me, 'Do I look like one of those emasculated fogies? Let's have

a swim. I detest antiquarian twaddle. Do people think I have no lucid intervals, that I came to Greece to scribble more nonsense? I will show them I can do something better: I wish I had never written a line, to have it cast in my teeth at every turn.' Brown and Gamba went to look for some place where we might pass the night, as we could not get mules to go on until the next day.

After a long swim, Byron clambered up the rocks, and, exhausted by his day's work, fell asleep under the shade of a wild fig-tree at the mouth of a cavern. Gamba, having nothing to do, hunted him out, and awakened him from a pleasant dream, for which the Poet cursed him. We fed off figs and olives, and passed our night at a goatherd's cottage.

In the morning we rode through the pleasant little island to Vathy, the capital. The Resident, Captain Knox, his lady, and everyone else who had a house, opened their doors to welcome us, and the Pilgrim was received as if he had been a prince. On the summit of a high mountain in the island, there is an ancient monastery, from which there is a magnificent view of the Ionian Sea, Greece, and many islands. The day after our arrival we ascended it, our party amounting to ten or twelve, including servants and muleteers. As usual, it was late when we started; there was not a breath of air, and the heat was intense. Following a narrow zig-zag path between rocks and precipices in single file, as our mules crept upwards our difficulty increased, until the path became merely stone steps, worn by time and travel in the solid limestone. We all dismounted but Byron; he was jaded and irritable, as he generally was when deprived of his accustomed midday siesta: it was dusk before we reached the summit of the mountain. The Abbot had been

apprised by the Resident of our visit; and when we neared the monastery, files of men stood on each side of our path, bearing pine torches. On coming up to the walls we saw the monks in their grey gowns, ranged along the terrace; they chaunted a hymn of glorification and welcome to the great lord, saying, 'Christ has risen to elevate the cross and trample on the crescent in our beloved Greece.' The Abbot, clad in his sacerdotal robes, received Byron in the porch, and conducted him into the great hall, illuminated for the occasion; the monks and others clustered round the honoured guest; boys swung censers with frankincense under the Poet's nose. The Abbot, after performing a variety of ceremonies in a very dignified manner, took from the folds of his ample garments a roll of paper, and commenced intoning through his nasal organs a turgid and interminable eulogium on my 'Lordo Inglese,' in a polyglot of divers tongues; while the eyes of the silent monks, anxious to observe the effect of the holy father's eloquence, glanced from the Abbot to the Lord.

Byron had not spoken a word from the time we entered the monkery; I thought he was resolved to set us an example of proper behaviour. No one was more surprised than I was, when suddenly he burst into a paroxysm of rage, and vented his ire in a torrent of Italian execrations on the holy Abbot and all his brotherhood. Then turning to us with flashing eyes, he vehemently exclaimed:

'Will no one release me from the presence of these pestilential idiots? they drive me mad!' Seizing a lamp, he left the room.

The consternation of the monks at this explosion of wrath may be imagined. The amazed Abbot remained for some time motionless, his eyes and

mouth wide open; holding the paper he had been reading in the same position, he looked at the vacant place left by Byron, and then at the door through which he had disappeared. At last he thought he had solved the mystery, and in a low tremulous voice said,—significantly putting his finger to his forehead:—

'Eccolo, è matto poveretto!' (Poor fellow, he is mad.)

Leaving Hamilton Brown to pacify the monks, I followed Byron. He was still fretting and fuming, cursing the 'whining dotard,' as he called the Abbot, who had tormented him. Byron's servant brought him bread, wine, and olives. I left him and joined the mess of the monks in their refectory. We had the best of everything the island produced for supper. Our host broached several flasks of his choicest vintages: but although he partook largely of these good things, they failed to cheer him. We were all glad to retire early to our cells.

In the morning, Byron came forth refreshed, and acted as if he had forgotten the occurrences of the evening. The Abbot had not, and he took care not to remind him of them. A handsome donation was deposited in the alms-box, and we mounted our mules and departed, without any other ceremony than a hasty benediction from the Holy Father and his monks. However we might have doubted the sincerity of their ovation on receiving us, we did not question the relief they felt and expressed by their looks on our departure.

The next day we retraced our steps through the flowery ravines and tranquil glades of this lovely islet, our road winding along the foot of the mountains. The grey olive-trees, bright green fig, and rampant vine, that grew above our heads, screened

us from the sun; the fresh breeze from the sea, with the springs of purest water gushing out of the rocks, soothed the Poet's temper. He turned out of the path to look at a natural grotto, in a grove of forest trees, and said, 'You will find nothing in Greece or its islands so pleasant as this. If this isle were mine,—"I would break my staff and bury my book."—What fools we all are!'

On reaching our former landing-place, we had to wait a long time for a boat to ferry us across the strait to Cephalonia. As usual, he and I took to the water; in the evening we crossed, and it was night when we regained our old quarters on board the *Hercules*.

It was near noon of the next day, when I had occasion to speak to Byron on pressing business. I descended to his cabin,—he was fast asleep. I repeatedly called him by name; at first in a low voice,—then louder and louder; at last he started up in terror, staring at me wildly. With a convulsive sigh he said, 'I have had such a dream! I am trembling with fear. I am not fit to go to Greece. If you had come to strangle me I could have done nothing.'

I said, 'Who could against a nightmare? the hag don't mind your pistols or your bible' (he always had these on a chair close to the side of his bed). I then talked on other subjects until he was tolerably composed, and so left him.

The conflicting accounts that came day by day from the Morea distracted us; to ascertain the real state of things, I proposed to go there. Byron urged me to stay until he went, so I remained for some time; but when he talked of leaving the ship and taking a house, I determined to be off.

CHAPTER XX

Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta stood,
There is a moral desert now;
The mean and miserable huts,
Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
The long and lonely colonnades,
Through which the ghost of Freedom stalks.

Queen Mab.

I WELL knew that once on shore Byron would fall back on his old routine of dawdling habits, plotting —planning—shilly-shallying—and doing nothing. It was a maxim of his, 'If I am stopped for six days at any place, I cannot be made to move for six months.'

Hamilton Brown agreed to go with me; he was a most valuable ally. In my hasty preparations for going, I was tearing up and throwing overboard papers and letters. Byron stopped me, saying, 'Some day you will be sorry for this; they are parts of your life. I have every scrap of paper that was ever written to me,—letters, notes,—even cards of invitation to parties. There are chests-full at Hansom's, Douglas Kinnaird's, and Barry's, at Genoa. They will edify my executors.'

'Is this quite fair to your correspondents?' I asked.

'Yes; for they have mine and might use them against me. Whilst I live they dare not,—I can keep them all in order; when I die and my memoirs are published,—my executors can verify them by my letters if their truth is questioned.'

I told Byron that two Frenchmen, just landed,

wished to see him; I thought they were officers. He said, 'Ask Hamilton Brown to see what they want. I can't express myself like a gentleman in French. I never could learn it,—or anything else according to rule.' He even read translations of French books in preference to the originals. His ignorance of the language was the reason that he avoided Frenchmen and was never in France.

In our voyage from Italy, Byron persuaded me to let him have my black servant, as, in the East, it is a mark of dignity to have a negro in your establishment. He likewise coveted a green embroidered military jacket of mine; which, as it was too small for me, I gave him; so I added considerably to his dignity. I engaged one of the refugee Zuliotes (or Zodiacs, as old Scott, our captain, called them) to go with me. He was a vain, lazy, swaggering braggart, —sullen and stupid as are most of his tribe.

Byron gave us letters addressed to the Greek government, if we could find any such constituted authorities,—expressing his readiness to serve them when they had satisfied him how he could do so, &c., &c., &c. As I took leave of him, his last words were, 'Let me hear from you often,—come back soon? If things are farcical, they will do for *Don Juan*; if heroical, you shall have another canto of *Childe Harold*.'

Hamilton Brown and I went on board a light boat of the country, called a caique, crossed over with a fair wind in the night, and landed early the next morning on a sandy beach, at a solitary ruined tower near Pyrgos. A dirty squad of Moorish mercenaries, quartered at the tower, received us; some of them accompanied us to the village of Pyrgos, where, as we could not procure horses or mules, we slept.

In the morning we commenced our journey to Tripolitza, the capital of the Peloponnesus, visiting the military stations on our way. We slept at the ruined villages, and were generally well received when our mission was known. The country is so poor and barren, that but for its genial climate it would be barely habitable. In the best of times there would not be plenty; but now that war had passed over the land with fire and slaughter there was scarcely a vestige of habitation or cultivation.

The only people we met besides soldiers looked like tribes of half-starved gipsies; over our heads, on some towering rock, occasionally we saw a shepherd with his long gun, watching us, and keeping guard over small flocks of goats and sheep, whilst they fed off the scanty shrubs that grew in the crevices under them; they were attended, too, by packs of the most savage dogs I ever saw. Except in considerable force, the Greek soldiers dared not meddle with these warlike shepherds and their flocks. Many of the most distinguished leaders in the war, and the bravest of their followers, had been shepherds.

To compensate for the hard fare and bodily privations to be endured, there was ample food for the minds of any who love the haunts of genius. Every object we saw was associated with some great name, or deed of arts or arms, that still live in the memory of all mankind. We stopped two or three days at Tripolitza, and then passed on to Argos and Napoli di Romania; every step of our way was marked by the ravages of the war. On our way to Corinth, we passed through the defiles of Dervenakia; our road was a mere mule-path for about two leagues, winding along in the bed of a brook, flanked by rugged precipices. In this gorge, and a more rugged path above it, a large Ottoman force, principally

cavalry, had been stopped, in the previous autumn, by barricades of rocks and trees, and slaughtered like droves of cattle, by the wild and exasperated Greeks. It was a perfect picture of the war, and told its own story; the sagacity of the nimble-footed Greeks, and the hopeless stupidity of the Turkish commanders, were palpable: detached from the heaps of dead, we saw the skeletons of some bold riders who had attempted to scale the acclivities, still astride the skeletons of their horses, and in the rear, as if in the attempt to back out of the fray, the bleached bones of the negroes' hands still holding the hair ropes attached to the skulls of their camels —death, like sleep, is a strange posture-master. There were grouped in a narrow space five thousand or more skeletons of men, horses, camels, and mules; vultures had eaten their flesh, and the sun had bleached their bones. In this picture the Turks looked like a herd of bisons trapped and butchered in the gorges of the rocky mountains. The rest of their battles, amidst scenery generally of the same rugged character, only differed in their magnitude. The Asiatic Turks are lazy, brave, and stupid. The Greeks, too crafty to fight if they could run, were only formidable in their fastnesses. It is a marvel that Greece and Greeks should be again resuscitated after so many ages of death-like slavery. No people, if they retain their name and language, need despair; 'There is nothing constant but mutability!'

We arrived at Corinth a short time after the Acrocorinthus had, for the second time, fallen into the hands of the insurgents; and there saw Colocotroni and other predatory chiefs. Thence we crossed to the Isle of Salamis, and found the legislative and executive bodies of the provisional government accusing each other of embezzling the public money.

Here, too, we saw the most potent leaders of the chief Greek military factions,—Primates, Hydriotes, Mainotes, Mareotes, Ipsareotes, Caudeotes, and many others, each and all intent on their own immediate interests. There, too, I saw the first specimens of the super-subtle Phanariotes, pre-eminent in all evil, reared at Constantinople, and trained in the arts of deception by the most adroit professors in the world. These pliant and dexterous intriguers glided stealthily from tent to tent and from chief to chief, impregnating their brains with wily suggestions, thus envenoming their feuds and causing universal anarchy. Confounded at this exhibition of rank selfishness, we backed out of these civil broils, and sailed for Hydra; one of our commissions being to send deputies from that island to England to negotiate a loan. We speedily accomplished this, and Hamilton Brown went to London with the deputies. I re-landed in Greece and went to Athens. Odysseus held undisputed sway there and in Eastern Greece, the frontiers of the war, and had played an important part in the insurrection. Descended from the most renowned race of Klephtes, he was a master of the art of mountain warfare, and a thorough Greek in cunning; strong-bodied, nimble-footed, and nimble-witted. I bought horses, hired soldiers, and accompanied him on an expedition to Euboea, then in the hands of the Turks; and under his auspices became familiar with many of the most interesting localities, —Attica, Marathon, Thebes, Thermopylae, Cheronea, Livadia, Talanta, Mount Parnes, Pindus and Cythaeron. Our head-quarters were on Parnassus. Our ambuscades, onslaughts, rock-fighting, forays, stalking Turkish cavalry, successes and failures, intermingled with conferences, treaties, squabbles, intrigues, and constant change, were exciting at the

time: so is deer-stalking; so was the Caffre war to those engaged in it; but as they are neither edifying nor amusing to write nor to read about, I shall not record them. In January, 1824, I heard that Byron was at Missolonghi; that a loan was about being negotiated in London, and that Colonel Stanhope and other English had arrived in Athens. I pressed upon Odysseus the necessity of our instantly returning thither, which we did. Shortly after, Stanhope proposed, and Odysseus agreed, to hold a congress at Salona, and that I should go to Missolonghi to invite Byron and the chiefs of Western Greece to attend it. I started on my mission with a band of followers; and we had been two days winding through the mountain passes,—for nothing can induce the Greeks to cross level ground, if there are Turks or the rumour of enemies near,—when a messenger from Missolonghi on his way to Salona, conveying the startling news of Byron's death, crossed our path, as we were fording the river Evvenus. Thus, by a stroke of fate, my hopes of being of use in Greece were extinguished: Byron and Stanhope, as commissioners of the loan, would have expended it on the war; and the sordid and selfish Primates, Machiavellian Phanariotes, and lawless Captanria would have been held in check. Byron thought all men rogues, and put no trust in any. As applied to Greeks, his scepticism was perfect wisdom. Stanhope was of a frank and hopeful nature; he had carefully examined the state of things, and would have been an able coadjutor, for he possessed those inestimable qualities,—energy, temper, and order—which Byron lacked. The first thing Stanhope did, was to establish a free press: many opposed this as premature, if not dangerous, but it was of eminent service, and the only institu-

tion founded at that time which struck root deep into the soil.

Colonel Stanhope gave me the following note to Byron, but the Colonel's prophetic warning was too late:—

Salona, 17 *April*, 1824.

My dear Lord Byron,

We are all assembled here with the exception of your Lordship and Monsieur Mavrocordato. I hope you will both join us; indeed, after the strong pledges given, the President ought to attend. As for you, you are a sort of Wilberforce, a saint whom all parties are endeavouring to seduce; it's a pity that you are not divisible, that every prefecture might have a fraction of your person. For my own part, I wish to see you fairly out of Missolonghi, because your health will not stand the climate and the constant anxiety to which you are there subjected.

I shall remain here till we receive your and the President's answer; I mean then to go to Egina, Zante, and England. If I can be of any service, you may command my zealous services.

Once more, I implore you to quit Missolonghi, and not to sacrifice your health and, perhaps, your life in that Bog.

I am ever your most devoted,

Leicester Stanhope.

CHAPTER XXI

Arnold!—Do you—dare you—
Taunt me with my born deformity.

Deformed Transformed.

With desponding thoughts I entered Missolonghi on the third day from my leaving Salona. Any spot on the surface of the earth, or in its bowels, that holds out a prospect of gain, you will find inhabited; a morass that will produce rice, the crust of a volcano in which the vine will grow; lagunes, in which fish abound, are temptations which overcome the terror of pestilence or death. So I was not surprised at seeing Missolonghi, situated as it is on the verge of the most dismal swamp I had ever seen. The marvel was that Byron, prone to fevers, should have been induced to land on this mudbank, and stick there for three months shut in by a circle of stagnant pools which might be called the belt of death. Although it was now the early spring, I found most of the strangers suffering from gastric fevers. It was the 24th or 25th of April when I arrived; Byron had died on the 19th. I waded through the streets, between wind and water, to the house he had lived in; it was detached, and on the margin of the shallow slimy sea-waters. For three months this house had been besieged, day and night, like a bank that has a run upon it. Now that death had closed the door, it was as silent as a cemetery. No one was within the house but Fletcher, of which I was glad. As if he knew my wishes, he led me up

a narrow stair into a small room, with nothing in it but a coffin standing on trestles. No word was spoken by either of us; he withdrew the black pall and the white shroud, and there lay the embalmed body of the Pilgrim—more beautiful in death than in life. The contraction of the muscles and skin had effaced every line that time or passion had ever traced on it; few marble busts could have matched its stainless white, the harmony of its proportions, and perfect finish; yet he had been dissatisfied with that body, and longed to cast its slough. How often I had heard him curse it! He was jealous of the genius of Shakspeare—that might well be—but where had he seen the face or form worthy to excite his envy? I asked Fletcher to bring me a glass of water. On his leaving the room, to confirm or remove my doubts as to the cause of his lameness, I uncovered the Pilgrim's feet, and was answered—the great mystery was solved. Both his feet were clubbed, and his legs withered to the knee—the form and features of an Apollo, with the feet and legs of a sylvan satyr. This was a curse, chaining a proud and soaring spirit like his to the dull earth. In the drama of *The Deformed Transformed*, I knew that he had expressed all he could express of what a man of highly-wrought mind might feel when brooding over a deformity of body: but when he said

> I have done the best which spirit may to make
> Its way with all deformity, dull deadly,
> Discouraging weight upon me,

I thought it exaggerated as applied to himself; now I saw it was not so. His deformity was always uppermost in his thoughts, and influenced every act of his life, spurred him on to poetry, as that was one

of the few paths to fame open to him,—and as if to be revenged on Nature for sending him into the world 'scarce half made up,' he scoffed at her works and traditions with the pride of Lucifer; this morbid feeling ultimately goaded him on to his last Quixotic crusade in Greece.

No other man, afflicted as he was, could have been better justified than Byron in saying,

> I ask not
> For valour, since deformity is daring;
> It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
> By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
> Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
> A spur in its halt movements, to become
> All that the others cannot, in such things
> As still are free to both, to compensate
> For step-dame Nature's niggardness at first;
> They war with fearless deeds, the smiles of fortune,
> And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them.

Knowing and sympathising with Byron's sensitiveness, his associates avoided prying into the cause of his lameness; so did strangers, from good breeding or common humanity. It was generally thought his halting gait originated in some defect of the right foot or ankle—the right foot was the most distorted, and it had been made worse in his boyhood by vain efforts to set it right. He told me that for several years he wore steel splints, which so wrenched the sinews and tendons of his leg, that they increased his lameness; the foot was twisted inwards, only the edge touched the ground, and that leg was shorter than the other. His shoes were peculiar—very high heeled, with the soles uncommonly thick on the inside and pared thin on the outside—the toes were stuffed with cotton-wool, and his trousers were very large

below the knee and strapped down so as to cover his feet. The peculiarity of his gait was now accounted for; he entered a room with a sort of run, as if he could not stop, then planted his best leg well forward, throwing back his body to keep his balance. In early life whilst his frame was light and elastic, with the aid of a stick he might have tottered along for a mile or two; but after he had waxed heavier, he seldom attempted to walk more than a few hundred yards, without squatting down or leaning against the first wall, bank, rock, or tree at hand, never sitting on the ground, as it would have been difficult for him to get up again. In the company of strangers, occasionally, he would make desperate efforts to conceal his infirmity, but the hectic flush on his face, his swelling veins, and quivering nerves betrayed him, and he suffered for many days after such exertions. Disposed to fatten, incapable of taking exercise to check the tendency, what could he do? If he added to his weight, his feet would not have supported him; in this dilemma he was compelled to exist in a state of semi-starvation; he was less than eleven stone when at Genoa, and said he had been fourteen at Venice. The pangs of hunger which travellers and shipwrecked mariners have described were nothing to what he suffered; their privations were temporary, his were for life, and more unendurable, as he was in the midst of abundance. I was exclaiming, 'Poor fellow, if your errors were greater than those of ordinary men, so were your temptations and provocations,' when Fletcher returned with a bottle and glass, saying, 'There is nothing but slimy salt water in this horrid place, so I have been half over the town to beg this bottle of porter,' and, answering my ejaculation of 'Poor fellow!' he said—

'You may well say so, sir, these savages are worse than any highwaymen; they have robbed my Lord of all his money and his life too.'

Whilst saying this, Fletcher, without making any remark, drew the shroud and pall carefully over the feet of his master's corpse—he was very nervous and trembled as he did it; so strongly had his weak and superstitious nature been acted upon by the injunctions and threats of his master, that, alive or dead, no one was to see his feet, for if they did, he would haunt him, &c., &c.

Fletcher gave me a sheet of paper, and from his dictation I wrote on Byron's coffin the particulars of his last illness and death. This account differs in many particulars from the one already published; in the same way that the fresh rough notes of an eye-witness, taken on the spot, differ on passing through the hands of the editor of a review to be served out to the public as an article to serve a cause or strengthen a faction—so let it be, I shall not question it.

A letter from his half-sister, Augusta Leigh, was on his writing-table. This lady was the only relation Byron had, or at least acknowledged; and he always spoke of her in the most affectionate terms. He was in the act of writing to her when he was taken ill. This unfinished letter I copied,—as the original would run many risks of being lost before it reached its destination. It is interesting as the last of Byron's writings—as an index, too, of his real and inward feelings; those letters that have been published were written, as I have already observed, under an assumed character and for effect.

His sister's letter contained a long transcript of one from Lady Byron; with a minute mental and physical account of their child, Ada. Lady

Byron's letter mentioned a profile of the child. I found it, with other tokens that the Pilgrim had most treasured, scattered on the floor,—as rubbish of no marketable value, and trampled on. I rescued from destruction a cambric handkerchief stained with his blood, and marked with a lady's name in hair; a ringlet; a ribbon; and a small glove. These relics I folded up with some of his own hair that I had shorn from his head.

This unfinished letter was the last of Byron's writings; it is to his half-sister, Augusta Leigh.

Missolonghi, Feb. 23, 1824.

My dearest Augusta,

I received a few days ago, your and Lady B.'s report of Ada's health, with other letters from England; for which I ought to be, and am (I hope) sufficiently thankful, as they are of great comfort and I wanted some, having been recently unwell —but am now much better, so that you must not be alarmed.

You will have heard of our journeys and escapes, and so forth,—perhaps with some exaggeration; but it is all very well now, and I have been some time in Greece, which is in as good a state as could be expected considering circumstances. But I will not plague you with politics—wars—or earthquakes, though we have had a rather smart one three nights ago, which produced a scene ridiculous enough, as no damage was done, except to those who stuck fast in the scuffle to get first out of the doors or windows; amongst whom, some recent importations from England, who had been used to quieter elements, were rather squeezed in the press for precedence.

I have been obtaining the release of about nine-

and-twenty Turkish prisoners,—men, women, and children, and have sent them, at my own expense, home to their friends; but one pretty little girl of nine years of age, named Hato or Hatagée, has expressed a strong wish to remain with me or under my care;—and I have nearly determined to adopt her, if I thought that Lady B. would let her come to England as a companion to Ada (they are about the same age), and we could easily provide for her,—if not, I can send her to Italy for education. She is very lively and quick, and with great black Oriental eyes and Asiatic features. All her brothers were killed in the revolution. Her mother wishes to return to her husband, who is at Previsa; but says that she would rather entrust the child to me in the present state of the country. Her extreme youth and sex have hitherto saved her life, but there is no saying what might happen in the course of the war (and of such a war). I shall probably commit her to the care of some English lady in the islands for the present. The child herself has the same wish, and seems to have a decided character for her age. You can mention this matter, if you think it worth while. I merely wish her to be respectably educated and treated; and if my years and all things be considered,—I presume it would be difficult to conceive me to have any other views.

With regard to Ada's health, I am glad to hear that she is so much better; but I think it right that Lady B. should be informed and guard against it accordingly; that her description of much of her disposition and tendencies very nearly resemble that of my own at a similar age,—except that I was much more impetuous. Her preference of *prose* (strange as it may now seem) *was*, and indeed *is*, mine (for I hate reading verse—and always did);

and I never invented anything but 'boats,—ships,' and generally something relative to the ocean. I showed the report to Colonel Stanhope, who was struck with the resemblance of parts of it to the paternal line,—even now.

But it is also fit, though unpleasant, that I should mention,—that my recent attack, and a very severe one,—had a strong appearance of epilepsy;—why, I know not—for it is late in life. Its first appearance at thirty-six, and, so far as I *know*, it is *not* hereditary;—and it is that it may not *become* so, that you should tell Lady B. to take some precautions in the case of Ada.

My attack has not returned,—and I am fighting it off with abstinence and exercise, and thus far with success;—if merely casual, it is all very well——

Gordon, in his *History of the Greek Revolution*, speaking of Byron just before his death, says: 'His health declined, and we cannot be surprised, considering what he had suffered, and was daily suffering, from the deceptions practised upon him, and importunate solicitations for money. Parry talked a great deal and did little; Mavrocordato promised everything, and performed nothing, and the Primates, who engaged to furnish 1,500 dollars towards the expenses of the fortifications, could not produce a farthing, and in lieu thereof presented him with the freedom of the town. The streets and country were a bed of mire, so he could not take any exercise out of doors.'

To return to what passed in Byron's house. On hearing a noise below, I went down into the public room, and found Parry with a comrade carousing. This man (Parry) had been a clerk in the civil department of the Ordnance at Woolwich, and was sent

out by the committee with the munitions of war, as head fire-master. In revolutions, however severely the body may suffer for want of pay and rations, your vanity is pampered to satiety by the assumption of whatever rank or title you may have a fancy for. Mavrocordato dubbed himself Prince; Byron, Commander-in-Chief; Parry the ordnance clerk, Major.

I said, 'Well, major, what do you think was the cause of Lord Byron's death?'

'Think? I don't think anything about it; I am a practical man, not a humbugging thinker; he would have been alive now if he had followed my advice. He lived too low: I told him so a thousand times. Two or three days before he slipped his wind, he said: "Parry, what do you think is the matter with me, the doctors don't know my complaint?" No, I said, nor nothing else, my lord; let me throw them out of the window. "What will do me good, Parry?" Brandy, my lord; nothing but brandy will save you; you have only got a chill on an empty stomach; let me mix you a stiff glass of grog, and you will be all right to-morrow, but he shook his head, so I gave him up as a lost man. My father,' he continued, 'lived to a great age on brandy, and then he would not have died, but the doctor stopped his drink, and the death-rattle choked his scuppers.'

'What did the doctors do, Parry, with Lord Byron?'

'Do! why they physicked and bled him to death. My lord called them assassins to their faces, and so they are. A pair of more conceited ignorant scamps I never saw; they are only fit to stand at the corners of alleys to distribute Doctor Eady's hand-bills.'

The fire-master was a rough burly fellow, never quite sober, but he was no fool, and had a fund

of pot-house stories which he told in appropriately slang language; he was a mimic, and amused Byron by burlesquing Jeremy Bentham and other members of the Greek committee. Besides these accomplishments, he professed a thorough knowledge of the art of fortification, and said he was the inventor of shells and fire-balls that would destroy the Ottoman fleet and the garrison of Lepanto. All he did, however, was to talk and drink. He was three months in Greece, returned to England, talked the committee out of £400 for his services, and drank himself into a madhouse. When he could get no more brandy to keep down the death-rattle, he died as he said his father had done. Six artificers whom he brought to Greece with him, staid there only a fortnight, and cost the committee £340.

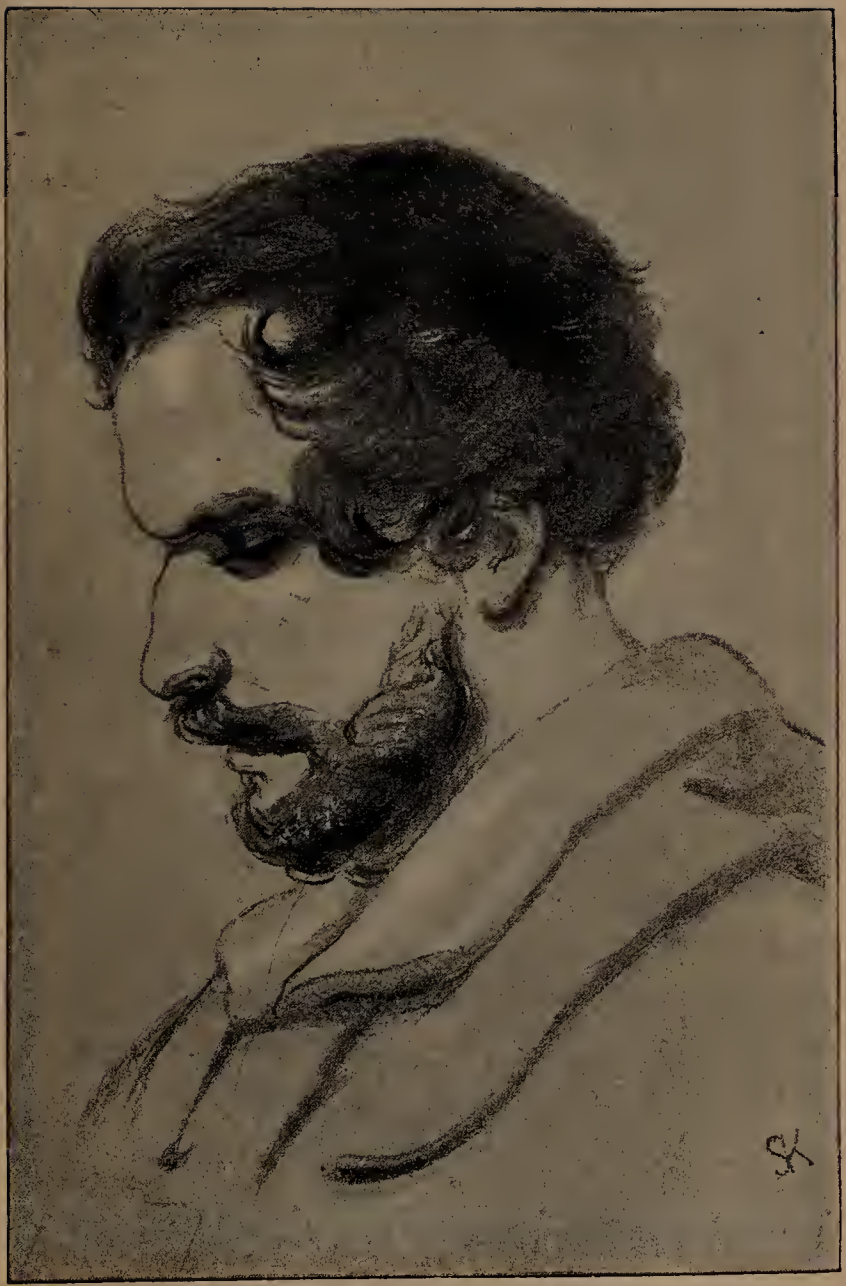
Out of the first loan of £800,000, negotiated in England, the Greeks got £240,000. The money Byron advanced by way of loan was repaid by the Greeks; but I believe it was invested in the Greek loan, and so lost.

CHAPTER XXII

When a man hath no freedom to fight for at home,
Let him combat for that of his neighbours;
Let him think of the glories of Greece and of Rome,
And get knock'd on the head for his labours.

Don Juan.

Early in the morning Gamba and I looked over Byron's papers; there were several journals and note-books; they contained memorandums of his thoughts, not of his actions—violent invectives on the Zuliotes and others.—Italian and English letters, fifteen stanzas of the seventeenth canto of *Don Juan*, dated 8th May, several songs finished, and sundry beginnings of poems, his opinions of Napoleon's banishment, continuations of *Childe Harold*, and the *Deformed Transformed*, and other fragments. Mavrocordato came in; finally we sealed up everything. The 30,000 or 40,000 dollars which Byron had brought with him to Missolonghi were reduced to 5,000 or 6,000. Mavrocordato urged that this sum should be left with him as a loan, and that he would be responsible for its repayment. I objected to this as illegal, and insisted on the money being shipped to the Ionian Islands. The prince was exceedingly put out at this; he evidently thought my scruples arose from no other motive than personal enmity to him. The congress at Salona he considered a scheme of mine to get Byron out of his hands, and to deliver him, Mavrocordato, into the clutches of Odysseus, and he was in great terror of that chief. These things I could see engendered in his mind a deadly



EDWARD JOHN TRELAWNEY

From a sketch by Seymour Kirkup

hatred of me. After the consummate art which this prince of Phanariotes had displayed in inveigling Byron and his dollars into Missolonghi, he looked upon him as a lawful prize, and on my efforts to rescue his victim as the height of audacity. I had no enmity to the prince, but I had a strong feeling of goodwill towards Byron; and never lost sight of his interest. To be brief, my plan had been simply this, to get Byron to Athens; Odysseus, whose confidence I had won, engaged to deliver up the Acropolis of that city, to put the said fortress into my hands the instant Byron promised to come there, and to allow me to garrison it with my own people and hold it; with no other condition than that of not giving it up to the Greek government as at the time constituted. There the poet would have been in his glory; he loved Athens. In that fortress with a Frank garrison he would have been thoroughly independent; he would have been safe from fevers, for it is the healthiest site in the world, as well as the most beautiful. If the Greeks succeeded in raising a loan, and he was appointed to control its expenditure, at Athens he would have been in a commanding position: aloof from the sordid civil and military factions, he might have controlled them—Byron was no soldier:

> Nor the division of a battle knew more than a spinster.

To carry on the war a disciplined army and an able general were indispensable. Sir C. J. Napier was the man exactly fitted for such an emergency; skilful, fearless, prompt, and decided as fate. The deep interest that great soldier felt in the cause of the Greeks was such, that he would have undertaken the war, although it would have cost him his commission

in the British service, if solicited by the proper authorities, and furnished with sufficient means and power. When Byron was on his death-bed, and wandering in his mind, Napier was uppermost in his thoughts; he cursed the mercenary and turbulent Zuliotes, exclaiming: 'When Napier comes, I will have them all flayed alive.'

In one of my visits to Cephalonia, expressly to inform Napier of the state of anarchy in Greece, I told him the first duty he would have to perform would be that of shooting and imprisoning half a dozen of the most refractory of the leaders of factions, as well as of the Captanria.

'No,' he said, 'you shall do that; you shall be Provost Marshal. If I go there, we will raise the price of hemp; and I won't go without two European regiments, money in hand to pay them, and a portable gallows.'

'I will accept the office, and do my duty,' I answered.

To resume my story. After I had seen Byron's effects dispatched to Zanté, I left Missolonghi to return to Salona. Many of the foreign soldiers who had been in Byron's pay, now that pay was stopped, volunteered to join me. I engaged as many as I could afford to keep. I had, likewise, five brass guns, with ammunition, and some other things sent out by the English committee, which I was authorised to take to Eastern Greece. Mavrocordato opposed this order, —but I enforced it; so that I had now a cavalcade of fifty or sixty horses and mules, and about a hundred men, including the Roumeliotes whom I had brought with me. In all my motley squad there was only one who spoke English, and he was a Scot. It would have been better had I omitted that one. When I arrived at Salona, I found Stanhope and a

host of others who had come to meet Byron. Stanhope had received a letter from the Horse Guards ordering him home.

I had now no motive for remaining in Greece. The Greeks were jealous of foreigners; those who had not money wandered about in rags and wretchedness, although many of them were very able soldiers, and had greatly distinguished themselves. But I did not like deserting Odysseus; he was very anxious I should stay. He said: 'The Greeks were naturally treacherous, artful, sordid, and fickle; and that history and tradition proved they had always been so.'

The congress dispersed. I returned with Odysseus into Livadia, and we re-visited Athens and Euboea,—carrying on the war in the same inefficient and desultory way as before, unaided by the government and abandoned to our own resources. Hitherto the military chiefs held all the real power in Greece; the territory they wrested from the Turks they considered as lawful prize: in short, they acted on

> The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can.

As to the government it was a mere farce, but its members knew it might one day become a reality. Their chief occupation consisted in raising money from those few spots not previously ravaged by the ruthless soldiers. The insignificant revenue thus raised they appropriated to their own uses.

They were now assembled at Nauplia. An English vessel arrived in that port with £40,000 assigned to them,—this being the first instalment of the Greek loan. The rush to the diggings in California and Australia, on the first discovery of gold in those

regions, was partial, if not orderly, as compared with the wild and universal rush of the Greeks on Nauplia. That town was beleaguered by armed legions of robbers, frantically clamouring for their share of the spoil. Their military leaders soon found, not only that they should get no money, but that they were in imminent peril of losing their heads.

The government determined to rule with a strong hand, and to crush their military rivals. They commenced organising a force and inveigling the men from their chiefs; they attempted to assassinate Odysseus, and were plotting to seize the great Moreote chieftain, Colocotroni,—so the great captains fled to their mountain strongholds. The government ultimately arrested Colocotroni and many others.

I remained with a hundred men between Livadia and Mount Parnes. Odysseus joined me there, and gave me an account of the state of things at Nauplia.

He said: 'By stratagem and force, with my own small means, I have kept the Turks out of the Morea for three years without aid from the government. The territory we captains have dispossessed the Sultan of, our self-elected government have sold to the Russians; and with the money they are to get rid of us, to make way for a foreign king and foreign soldiers.'

I asked, 'What king?'

He said, they were 'divided on that subject, but the Russian party was the strongest, for they had the priests, the Phanariotes and Moreotes, with them; but,' he added, 'what puzzles me is, that England should advance money to make Greece a hospodariot of Russia. I never met any Greek who could understand the reason why so shrewd a nation of traffickers as the English should lend them such large sums of money, since every one must know, they said, that

they neither could nor would repay any portion of it.'

I urged Odysseus to resign his command, and with a few followers to retire to the mountains—adding that 'borrowed money in the hands of a knavish government would soon vanish.'

Odysseus said, 'This part of the country, Livadia, my father inherited from his father, who won it by his valour, and when it was lost through the treachery of the Venetians, who sold my father to the Sultan, I regained it by my wits, and have kept it with my sword.'

'And so you may again, if you are dispossessed now,' I answered, 'if you bide your time.'

How can a soldier, with nothing but his sword, defend himself against infernal machinations devised by a Prince of Hell, armed with a chest of gold? Phanariotes, like devils, work in the dark!

In one of the precipices of Mount Parnassus, in Livadia, the highest mountain in Greece, there is a cavern, at an elevation of a thousand feet above the plain. This cavern Odysseus had, with great ingenuity, managed to ascend, and convert into a place of safety for his family and effects during the war. The only access to it was by ladders, bolted to the rock. The first ladder, forty-five or fifty feet in length, was placed against the face of the rock, and steadied by braces; a second, resting on a projecting crag, crossed the first; and a third, lighter and shorter, stood on its heel on a natural shelf in the fractured stone. This third ladder led to a trap-door; the bolts and bars of which being removed, you entered a vaulted guard-room, pierced with lancet-holes for musketry. This opened on a broad terrace, sixty feet in length, screened by a substantial parapet-wall, breast-high, with embrasures mounted with cannon.

The height of the natural arch spanning the cave is thirty feet above this lower terrace, so that it is particularly light, airy, and cheerful, commanding extensive and magnificent views. Ascending by steps to a yet higher terrace of solid rock, the breadth and height of the cave diminishes, until the end is reached. On the right of the great cave there is a smaller one; besides which there are many small grottoes, the size of chambers, connected by galleries. They are perfectly dry, and were used for store-rooms and magazines. One of them I converted into a chapel for an old priest, covering the rugged walls with gaudy hangings, flaming paintings, and holy relics of saints, saved from the desecrated churches in the neighbourhood.

The interior of this magnificent cavern often reminded me, with its grottoes, galleries, and vaulted roof, of a cathedral, particularly when the softened light of the evening obscured its ruggedness, or by moonlight. The towering mass of rock above the cave projected boldly over its base. To make it perfect, there was a never-failing supply of the purest water, which found its way through subterranean channels from the regions of perpetual snow, filtering through fractures in the rock above into a capacious cistern built on the upper terrace.

This cavern was our citadel, and by removing the upper ladder became impregnable without the aid of a garrison. We built boarded houses within it, and stored it with all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life, besides immense supplies of arms and ammunition.

I urged Odysseus to abide in this stronghold, saying that the borrowed money was sure to be embezzled by a government composed of arrant sharpers; and that but a small part of it would be

FORTIFIED CAVE IN MOUNT PARNASSUS, THE STRONGHOLD OF ODYSSEUS

A.D. 1824

applied to the purpose it was contracted for. Besides, Ibrahim Pasha was on his way to Greece with an immense force. Civil wars were already rife in the Morea. 'The Greeks,' I continued, 'and their country are so admirably adapted for guerilla warfare, that those chiefs who had carried on the insurrection successfully, and had shown that they alone had capacity to continue it, must be recalled from banishment to defend their country. Then you can retaliate on the government by demanding an account of their stewardship.'

'I did expose their frauds to their faces,' exclaimed the chief, 'in the National Assembly at Nauplia, and on the same night two shots were fired at me from a window opposite to the one I was sitting at. My guards seized the miscreants, and I gave them up to the police, but they were not punished. If I stay here, we shall be beleaguered by assassins, and prevented from communicating with my lieutenants and followers. Ghouras still holds the Acropolis of Athens. I cannot stay here; a stag at bay is more to be feared than a lion blockaded in his den.'

It was decided that I should remain, and he go forth. I had shared in his prosperity, and would not leave him in his adversity. As a garrison was superfluous, I reduced mine to half a dozen. To guard against treachery, I chose men of different countries, who were not likely to conspire together: a Greek, Turk, Hungarian, and Italian, a venerable priest, and two Greek boys as servants.

Our other inmates were the chief's son, an infant, his wife, mother, and two or three other women. I entrusted the keys of the entrance to the Albanian Turk, a resolute determined fellow.

In the mountains of Pindus and Agrafa, in Thessalia, they have the noblest breed of dogs in the

world. In size and strength they are not much inferior to the king of beasts, and in courage and sagacity they are superior. When thorough-bred and well trained they are held in such estimation by their owners, that money will not buy them. We had one of these. He did the duty of a guard of soldiers, patrolling the lower terrace at night, and keeping watch at the guard-room door by day. He would not enter a room. He was best pleased in the winter snowstorms, when the icicles hung on his long brindled hair and shaggy mane. It was impossible to elude his vigilance or corrupt his fidelity; he would not take food from any other hands than mine or the Albanian's, and could not be bribed. This is more than I could say of any Greek that I had dealings with, during the three years I lived amongst them.

In addition to the small number within the cave, I had a much larger force at the foot of the ladders. They were hutted within a stone breast-work. I gave the command of them to the Scotchman whom I had brought from Missolonghi. Their duty was to patrol the passes of the mountain, to collect the tithes or tribute from the neighbouring villages (these were paid in kind), to learn the news, and to keep up my correspondence with the chief and others.

The name of the Scotchman was Fenton. Thomas was, I think, his Christian name. He introduced himself to me, as I have before narrated, on my visit to Western Greece, saying he had come out expressly to join Lord Byron's regiment; that he had served in the civil wars in Spain, was skilled in guerilla warfare, that his funds were exhausted, and, as I was proceeding to the war, he begged me to take him with me.

I pointed out the deplorable condition of foreigners in Greece generally, and the peculiar state of things in that part of the country I was going to in particular, and offered to advance him money to return home. As he persisted in his wish to go with me, I reluctantly yielded to his importunity.

He was a tall, bony man, with prominent eyes and features, dark hair, and long face, in the prime of life, thirty-one or thirty-two years of age. His dress, accoutrements, and arms were all well chosen. He was restless, energetic, enterprising, and a famous walker. During the time he was with me I sent him on many missions to the Ionian Islands for money, to the seat of government to see what they were doing, and with letters to friendly chiefs, so that he was not much at the cave; and when he was, he lived in a hut below it. I supplied him with all he wanted—my purse was his. He was not squeamish on these points, but sensual, and denied himself nothing within his reach. When in my neighbourhood, he passed most of his time with me. No querulous word or angry glance ever ruffled our friendly intercourse. I thought him honest, and his staying with me a proof of his good-will, if not personal friendship, and never omitted an occasion of doing him a service.

When Odysseus had been absent three or four months, rumours reached me in January, 1825, that the government were resolved to deprive the chief of his command in Eastern Greece. To do this effectually, they were endeavouring to detach his lieutenant, Ghouras, who held Attica, from him. I despatched Fenton to Athens and Nauplia, to ascertain the truth of these reports.

CHAPTER XXIII

Another proudly clad
In golden arms, spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men.

Hellas—SHELLEY.

I WAS told some time after this that Odysseus was corresponding with Omer Pasha of Negropont, and fearing that he might resort to some desperate measures in his present difficulties, I left the cave one night in a snowstorm, and with a trusty follower who knew the country, we descended to the plain, threading our way through the rocks and pine-trees. We mounted two swift Arab horses, gallopped along a hollow valley, crossed a deep stream, the Sperchius, and proceeded towards the town of Livadia, where we arrived the next day. I was surprised to see Turkish Delhi cavalry, known at a great distance by the immense height of their head-gear, careering on the plain. On meeting Odysseus, he told me he had made a truce for three months with Omer Pasha. The only stipulation between them was that, for that period, Eastern Greece was to be a neutral territory —he said, 'It is the only way in which I could save the people from being massacred. I have written to the Athenians to say that, as the government have not only refused to give me rations or money for my troops, but are doing their utmost to induce them to desert me, I cannot longer defend the passes which lead to Athens.'

I knew it was a common practice of the military leaders in Greece to make treaties with the enemy in

the provinces they governed, for especial objects, on their own responsibility—yet I saw at once the chief had made a fatal error in doing so on the present occasion. I told him that, although his family had ruled in Livadia for three generations, the Turks in the Morea had been dispossessed after four centuries of possession; that now the Greek government were strong, and would direct all their forces to crush him. If he took refuge with the Turks, they would betray him, and send him or his head to Constantinople. 'I know that,' he answered, 'I shall take care of that; they are in my power; what I have done is only to bring the Greek government to terms.' I saw that he was anxious and perplexed, and that he repented of the step he had taken, and had been plotting to extricate himself before I arrived at Livadia. The next day we went to Thebes, and on the one succeeding followed the line of the Euboean Strait to Talanta.

The hollowness of this armistice was apparent—Odysseus and the Ottoman Bey, suspecting each other of treachery, used every precaution to avoid being ensnared. The Turkish horse stuck to the level ground, the Greeks clung to the hills; Odysseus skirted them, his best men and swiftest runners dogging his steps, and keeping him from being cut off from his guerillas.

The Delhi Colonel was selected from the Turkish host at Euboea, as the only soldier capable of contending in arts or arms with the wily and able Greek chief: he was the best specimen of an Eastern warrior I had seen,—calm, vigilant, and dexterous in the disposition of his troopers. Our chief knew the country better than any man in it. I urged him to give the enemy the slip, and to come to the cavern. His answer was, 'Stay, not yet!'

It was early in February we stopped at Talanta on a wet stormy night: in selecting his quarters, our chief with his usual sagacity fixed upon the ruins of a Greek church, situated as the Greek churches, chapels, and monasteries usually are, on an elevated and defensible site—the town was abandoned and in ruins. After we had supped and were smoking our pipes, some of the Greek patrols came in, saying they had captured two Franks. They were ordered to bring them in. I told the chief to make no allusion to me, but to question them through his secretary.

As they entered, one of them observed to his comrade in English, 'What a set of cut-throats! Are they Greeks or Turks?'

'Mind what you say.'

'Oh! they only want our money,' answered the other. 'I hope they will give us something to eat before they cut our throats. I am famished.'

Certainly appearances were against us. At one end of the building, Odysseus, the Greek chief, the Turkish Bey, and I sat smoking our pipes. At the other end, within the church, stood our horses saddled, ready for mounting, the soldiers lying down in clusters along the sides, with all their gear on, for neither Greeks nor Turks divest themselves of a single article of dress or arms during the night. Their hands still grasped their weapons, and they slept so lightly that if in talking a voice was raised their eager wolfish eyes were instantly upon the speaker. On the strangers entering, some of the soldiers sprang up, others leant on their elbows to listen or rather to look on, for they could not understand a word. The travellers told their story,—stating that they were last from Smyrna, and had landed that morning from an English brig, at a small port in the Gulf of Euboea, with no other

object than to see the country. Neither of the chiefs believed them, nor did I; nevertheless, they were treated hospitably, had supper, coffee, and pipes, and their baggage placed beside them. They sat together in a spare corner close to us, with no arms but fowling-pieces. One of them was very ill at his ease, the other, who I learnt from their discourse was a major, took things as coolly as if he had been at an inn, said the cold lamb (it was goat) was the best he had ever tasted, and asked the Greek attendant, if he had no rackie (spirit), the only Romaic word he had learnt. Odysseus understanding what he wanted, told the boy to give him wine.

'If they are robbers,' exclaimed the major, 'they are damned good fellows, so I drink success to their next foray." Soon after, one of them lay down in a dark corner. Turks, Greeks, and all Orientals, consider it the greatest possible insult as well as an outrage on decency, for any one in public to change his garments or expose any part of his person below the waist. The major was a remarkably tall, gaunt, bony man: after finishing his wine, he set to work to make up a comfortable bed with horse-cloths, slips of carpet, a bag for a pillow, &c.; when he had done this to his satisfaction, we supposed he would lie down, as his companion had done. On the contrary, he deliberately, as if in his own barrack-room, utterly regardless of our presence, took off his boots, socks, coat, waistcoat, trousers, and shirt, folding each article carefully up and placing it by his bedside. Thus exhibiting himself in all possible attitudes stark naked, he leisurely filled the bowl of his Turkish pipe, and advanced towards us to light it at the fire.

The two chiefs at first looked on the major's novel proceedings with curiosity, as visitors in the Zoo-

logical Gardens do at the hippopotamus; but as the process of stripping advanced, they looked serious; the shirt scene took away their breath; their pipes went out when the major advanced towards them. The Turk started up in horror with his hand on his sword. The major, supposing he was making way for him from civility, and unconscious of giving any offence, made a very polite bow to us generally; and, in a gentle and conciliating tone, said, in his own language, 'Pray, gentlemen, keep your seats, don't let me disturb you;' bent his body into a sharp angle, so as to draw a light from the burning embers. The position he stood in was so ludicrous, that Odysseus and I could not resist laughing. The major considering this a token of good fellowship, insisted on shaking hands with us, saying, 'I am sure you are both good fellows—Good night!'

I now saw by the light of the fire that he was not absolutely naked, for he had a leather waistcoat and drawers on, but they fitted as tight as his skin, and were exactly of the same colour. The major lay down and smoked himself to sleep. Odysseus went out and brought back the Turkish bey.

Expecting to be surprised by Turks or Greeks, and distrusting those with us, we could not sleep; so our chief, to conceal his own anxiety, and to wile away the time, recounted to the Turk the marvellous things he had seen done at Yanina by the Franks whilst he was serving with Ali Pasha. Odysseus then questioned the Osmanlee about Paradise and Mahomet, very profanely. The Albanian Turks are by no means bigots: our bey had evidently very little faith in anything but his sword. At length we dozed as we sat.

Before daylight the major got up and went out; I followed him, accosting him in his native tongue.

'How well you speak English, my good fellow,' he said.

The frank and cordial manner of the major so impressed me with his honesty, that I hurriedly explained who I was, the critical state of things with us, and my anxiety to extricate Odysseus from the peril that encompassed him.

The major instantly and earnestly entered into my views, saying, 'The vessel we came in will remain two or three days in the port; it will take but a few hours to reach her. I will return and stop by her for Odysseus, detain her as long as I can, and go with him to the Ionian Islands.'

I told the chief our plan, he eagerly accepted the offer,—I pledging myself to keep possession of his mountain home, and to protect his family until altered circumstances permitted him to return to Greece. Hastily making the needful arrangements, the good-hearted major departed on his mission. The chief having much to say to me, and thinking it probable I might be in danger on my return to the cave, convoyed me with his whole force. On our parting, he called some of his principal followers, and said, 'I call you to witness, I give this Englishman the cavern and everything of mine in it.' Then turning to me, he said, 'Do what you think best without referring to me.' As we sat on the turf by a broken fountain, he placed his rough hairy hand on my bosom, saying, 'You have a strong heart in a strong body: you find fault with me for distrusting my countrymen,—I never doubted you. I trusted you from the first day as I do now on the last we may ever be together; though I cannot understand why you give money and risk life, to serve those who would shoot you for money, as they will me if they can.'

Either from the vigilance of the Ottomans at Euboea, or of those with him, or from some other impediment, the chief did not reach the port he was to have embarked from until after the vessel had sailed with the major, although he had detained her as long as possible. I then expected the chief would make for the cave; we kept a sharp look-out, and posted men at the several passes; he wrote to me from time to time, but nothing definitively; and we passed months in this state of suspense. Fenton came from the Morea. I was in the daily habit of sallying forth to gather news, though warned against it. Early in April, when I was some distance from my den, I was startled by a shot; the red-capped Greeks were dogging me behind the rocks and pine-trees: I hastened up the steep ascent, gained the lower ladder, mounted slowly until I recovered my wind, then faster, the musket-balls whistling by me right and left—above and below. I should have come down faster than I went up, but from the great advantage my men above had, and the sharp cross-fire they kept up to cover my retreat. On my entering the trap-door my assailants retreated across the mountain.

Shortly after this occurrence a large body of Greeks came to Velitza, a village at the foot of our mountain, a detachment ascended towards us; on coming near, one of them advanced, holding a green bough as a flag of truce: he said, Odysseus was with the troops below, and that he had brought a letter from him to me. It was to this effect, that he—Odysseus—was now with his friend Ghouras; he intreated me to come to him, to confer on matters of great importance; saying that hostages would be given for my safe return, &c.

I merely answered, 'If what you say is true, why

don't you come here? you may bring Ghouras or half a dozen others with you.'

Several notes of this sort were exchanged. In the last, our chief urged me to capitulate as the only means of saving his life; telling me that I might now do so on my own terms, for those with him were Romeliotes favourably disposed to him and to me; and that if I lost this opportunity, I should be blockaded by his enemies, the Moreotes, who would give us no quarter. Of course I declined, for I knew the chief was writing under compulsion: the messenger tried what he could do by tampering with my men, individually proffering large bribes; so I told one of the men to shoot him if he spoke another word. During this parley the most nimble-footed of the enemy scaled the cliffs to see if it was possible to get at us by the aid of ropes from above, or by blasting the rocks, or with shot or shell. I sent several of my people to mingle with the foe, offering five thousand dollars to those who would aid the escape of Odysseus. On the fourth or fifth day they departed,—leaving spies to watch us, as I knew they would. I then sent all the men I could trust to follow on the trail of our chief, and wrote to all his friends. That I might not be made a target of a second time, I did not venture forth alone.

CHAPTER XXIV

Spare me! oh spare!—I will confess,
——————————— They
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
And my companion forthwith murdered him.

Cenci.

In the latter end of May, 1825, a young Englishman named Whitcombe came to me from Racora, in Boeotia, where he had been serving with the Greek troops. At all times glad to see my countrymen, I was particularly so at that time: Fenton was especially pleased with him. They both dined and passed their evenings with me, but slept below in Fenton's hut. On the fourth day, after our noonday meal, we sat smoking and drinking on the verandah of my house on the lower terrace longer than usual.

It was intensely hot; all my people had retreated into one of the upper grottoes, where it was always cool, to enjoy their usual siesta. Fenton said, he had made a bet with Whitcombe about their shooting, and that I was to decide it. My Italian servant, Everett, then put up a board for a target at the extremity of the terrace. After they had fired several shots, at Fenton's suggestion I sent the Italian to his comrades above. Fenton then said to me, after some more shots had been fired wide of the mark, 'You can beat him with your pistol, he has no chance with us veterans.'

I took a pistol from my belt and fired; they were standing close together on a flat rock, two yards behind me; the instant I had fired I heard another

report, and felt that I was shot in the back. As one of their flint guns had just before hung fire, and I had seen Fenton doing something to the lock of his, I thought it was an accident. I said, 'Fenton, this must have been accidental!' He assured me it was so, and expressed the deepest sorrow. No thought of their treachery crossed my mind. Fenton said, 'Shall I shoot Whitcombe?' I answered, 'No.' I took my other pistol from my belt, when Fenton said, 'I will call your servant,' and hastily left me, following Whitcombe to the entrance porch. The dog, growling fiercely, first stopped their flight; he had the voice of a lion, and never gave a false alarm. The Hungarian, always prompt, was quickly at his post on the upper terrace, and hearing I was shot, instantly killed Fenton. Whitcombe attempted to escape by the trap-door leading to the ladder; the dog threw him on his back, and held him as if he had been a rat. Achmett, the Turk, seized him, bound his arms, dragged him to a crane used for hoisting things from below, put a slip-knot in the rope, and placed it round his ankles to hang him. His convulsive shrieks and the frantic struggles he made as his executioners were hoisting him over the precipice, calling on God to witness that he was innocent, thrilled through my shattered nerves; he beseeched me to let him live till the morning, or for one hour, that he might write home, or even for five minutes until he had told me everything. I could not conceive it possible that an English gentleman, my guest, on the most cordial terms with me, should after four days' acquaintance, conspire with Fenton to assassinate me—there had been no provocation, and I could see no motive for the act. Fenton had never seen Whitcombe before, nor had I. If there was foul play, Fenton must have been the traitor: so

thinking, I ordered the execution to be postponed until the mystery was solved. I had very great difficulty in staying the execution, every one in the cave clamouring for vengeance. His life now hung on mine, and everybody thought that I was mortally wounded. They all swore if I died, they would roast him by a slow fire: this was no idle threat, for it had been done on more than one occasion during the sanguinary war. When I was shot, I sat down on the rock I had been standing on; bending down my head to let the blood flow from my mouth, a musket-ball and several broken teeth came with it—the socket of the teeth was broken, and my right arm paralysed. I walked without assistance into the small grotto I had boarded up and floored and called my house; it was divided into two small rooms, and there was a broad verandah in front. Squatting in a corner, my servant cut open my dress behind, and told me I had been shot with two balls between my shoulders, near together, on the right side of my spine, and one of them close to it. One of the balls, as I have said, its force expended on my bones, dropped from my mouth without wounding my face; the other broke my collar-bone, and remained in my breast—it is still there. No blood issued from the places they had entered at. We had no surgeon or medicines in the cave; the air was so dry and pure, our living so simple, that this was the first visit sickness or sorrow paid us. Nature makes no mistakes, doctors do; probably I owe my life to a sound constitution, and having had no doctor.

The morning after I had respited Whitcombe, my servant brought me the following letter from him, which he read to me, though he could not speak English:

'For God's sake, sir, permit me to see you, if it is

but for five minutes conversation; it will save my life. In the fulness of contrition I yesterday told Favourite (Everett) my crime, and through misconstruction, or some other cause, he has interpreted it to Camerone, so as to cause my death. They all declare to me they will kill me and burn me. Camerone knocked me down and has thrown me in irons. For the mercy of Almighty God, let me see you; instead of augmenting, my explanation will palliate my offence. I wish not that it should be alone. I wish also that Camerone and Everett should be by, to question me before you, and to endeavour to implicate me if they can. I wish only to tell you all the circumstances which I told Everett. Camerone declares that I have plotted all the evil for Ulysses (Odysseus). For God's sake let me explain myself immediately, and do not let me be murdered without a word of explanation. O God! my misery is already too great; they care not for what you tell them; they want to tie me up by my irons to the beam of the room, and cut my head off.'

I refused to see him: he then wrote an incoherent account of what took place between him and Fenton —the latter accusing me of having usurped his place, as Odysseus wished him to have the command during his absence; saying that Odysseus had sent a messenger to him at Athens to that effect, and that on his return he should take possession of the cave; that there were beautiful women in it, and stores of gold; he would man it with English, clothe his followers with rich dresses and jewels: there would be a row first, a scene of blood, but that all he wanted was a friend to stand by him. By Whitcombe's account— too rambling and absurd to transcribe—his feeble brain was worked up to a state of homicidal insanity; he used the gentle term of infatuation. He

persisted in his asseveration that Fenton shot me, and his only crime was not warning me of my danger. The only thing his writing proved, was that he had a very feeble intellect, and that Fenton had taken advantage of his weakness. He was now mad with terror, he screamed and shrieked if any one came near him, he was in irons and chained to the wall, with no other food than bread and water. I resolved on the twentieth day of his imprisonment to set him free, which I did. When restored to life and liberty he wrote me the following letter:—

MUCH-INJURED SIR,

I cannot express to you what I feel for your unmerited kindness to me for your releasing me from an untimely death; other release it is not in the power of man to procure for me, my internal misery and shame being complete. May you never feel the half that I do. May you never be like me, reduced by an acquaintance of four days with a villain from the smiling circles who loved me, and had pleasure in my society, to the solitary wretched outcast which I am now become. I have now no home, no family, no friends—and all I regret is that I have still the gnawings of a conscience which makes me prefer life a little longer, with all my former enjoyments cut off, to an ignominious and untimely end. I can say no more, perhaps now I have troubled you too much.

That God may send you a speedy recovery, and turn every curse which falls upon my head into a blessing upon yours, is the prayer of the wretched

W. G. WHITCOMBE.

He subsequently addressed one of his friends as follows:

Camp, *August* 11, 1825.

My dear Sir,

You will, perhaps, be astonished at my addressing you, when from the unhappy circumstances into which my fatality has immersed me, I ought only to calculate on your discarding all converse with a being whose sin has placed between him and society a gulf fitter to be removed by any hands but his. But I cannot, cannot bear so sudden a transition into exquisite misery and shame without a line which may give palliatives to my offence. Scan it with a dispassionate eye; my only motive for begging this last favour of you is, that you may rather hold me the weak unsuspecting tool, than the practised unprincipled villain. Others played that part; others saw my easy nature, and thought me a fit instrument for the furthering of their grand speculations and enterprises. They discerned rightly—they have entailed the curse upon me; they have made the villain of me that they wished; but yet shall that curse be retaliated upon them. One is dead: the other still lives, and has left behind him many little interesting traits of character which will tend well to the blazonment of his fame, and conscience, if not warped by constant meannesses, shall by its sweet recollections requite him for the rest.

Charmed by Mr. Humphreys' account of the excessive intrepidity, honour, romantic situation, &c., &c., of his friend Fenton, added to his good-nature and *bonhomie*, I was induced by the repeated, by the urgent entreaties of that Mr. Humphreys, added to a letter (expressing the most pressing invitation from Fenton, addressed to Humphreys, with many dark mystic expressions, known only, I presume, to

himself)—I was induced, I say, to pay that visit to the cave. On my arrival I was beset by Fenton's utmost talents of duplicity (in which never mortal man has excelled him). Touched by his mournful tales of wrongs, rejection, deprivation of right, viewing him only as the romantic, the injured, the generous hero he had been represented by Humphreys, I swore to stand by him on his resolution to recover his rights or die. He worshipped me for it, and being too good a discerner of character to disclose further the nature of his designs, at the idea of which he knew I would revolt, he nailed me to the spot and moment of action, and by not giving a minute's time to recover from my infatuation, he precipitated me into that hell of guilt and shame which had long yawned for the wretched adventurer as his meed, but which, without arraigning Providence, might still, methinks, have been withheld from me. But where misfortune ever exists, there am I sure to get acquainted with it. And because such a villain survived in the same land, I, without holding with him a shadow of previous connection, without one thought in the whole association of our ideas, which brought with it the slightest similitude, whereby to enable me to account by a harsh destiny, for my being coupled with the memory of such a villain's fate, am nevertheless doomed, solely because such an one exists, to connect myself, and all my happiness and honour, irretrievably with his fate. I am now a wandering outcast, a being whose very claim on society is departed, and would not now wish to renew those claims, from the recollections of dependence which would necessarily hang on that renewal.

But it is not for myself that I am wretched. No —I can roam to far distant regions, and amidst

other scenes and other inhabitants commence a new career, unembittered by the past. It is for my family, a family who had boasted that, through all their branches and connections, it had never had a spot to sully it. That that family should, through my faults, be disgraced, is more than I can bear. My mother is a parent who loves me to distraction. I received a letter a few days ago from that quarter. She has been dangerously ill, and the only reflection that contributes to her recovery is that of seeing me return crowned with laurels. They will be laurels!

Now view the reverse. It has been reported that I was dead. That report, with aggravated causes, will reach the ears of my family; my mother, I know, will not survive it. And all this for me.

I only regret that being too great a coward to put an end to my existence, I cannot cut off the miseries of anticipation.

But I have troubled you too long with subjects about which you can feel but little interest. Only one word more. Should an opportunity present itself, for God's sake let not accounts reach England that I am killed.

With hopes that you will excuse my long and selfish letter, and with many kindest remembrances to Mrs. Alison and all your family,

I remain,

Your sincere though unfortunate friend,

(Signed) W. G. Whitcombe.

PS.—I sincerely regret that, by the most untoward circumstances, both the letters which you have been good enough at different times to send me, have been lost before they reached my hands; the one by the lies of that rascal Charlilopulo—the other by Dr. Tindal, amongst his other things.

CHAPTER XXV

'Tis thus
Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts
Upon the abettors of their own resolves,
Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.

SHELLEY.

FOUL plots have been devised, and fit instruments found to execute them in less than four days. I was much more astonished and humiliated at the retrospection of my idiotic infatuation when, by Fenton's papers and other evidence, I discovered that I had been his dupe from the first—a blind man led by a fiendish cur—no more. He was foisted on me at Missolonghi, to act as a spy on Odysseus, and had done so for a whole year.

My credulity was such that I not only told him all I knew, but employed him in many important transactions. Not a shadow or doubt of his honesty ever crossed my mind from the first day of our meeting until his death. I was a fool, and deserved my fate. Fenton, a mercenary bungling ruffian, in the hands of a professor of the black art.

To cut short this disagreeable subject, I extract from Gordon's always fearless and generally accurate History of the Greek Revolution, his brief notice of the affair :—

'On taking the field, Odysseus deposited his family in his den on Mount Parnassus, which he confided to the guard of Trelawny (who had lately married his youngest sister), with a handful of men, for that singular cavern is impregnable, and when the ladders

that gave access to it were removed, neither armies nor artillery could make any impression. It is a perpendicular height of one hundred and fifty feet from the bottom of a precipice, and sheltered above by a lofty arch. In front were natural and artificial bulwarks, concealing the interior and a portal cut in the rock, to which the flights of ladders gave access; within were houses, magazines stored for the consumption of years, and a fine spring of water.

'An attempt was made to murder Trelawny by two of his own countrymen, one of whom, Fenton, a determined villain, having accepted a bribe from the government, seduced the other, a crack-brained young man, into complicity by extravagant tales, and the perpetual excitement of potent liquors. Although pierced through the back with two carbine balls, fracturing his arm and his jaw, the wonderful vigour of his constitution enabled Trelawny to recover. In the midst of his agony, he had the magnanimity to dismiss, unhurt, the unhappy youth who fired at him; as for Fenton, the prime assassin, he was instantly shot by a Hungarian soldier.

'In the same month, on the 17th of June, the rising sun disclosed the lifeless body of Odysseus stretched at the foot of the tower that had been his prison; it was said, that a rope by which he was lowering himself had broken, and that he was killed by the fall; however, no one gave credit to this story; it was supposed that he had been strangled, and then thrown from the top. Ghouras subsequently felt remorse for the death of his former patron; heard with pain the mention of his name, and occasionally murmured, "In that business I was misled." There can be no doubt that Mavrocordato was at the bottom of these tragical events, instigated fully as much by private revenge as care of the

public weal. Odysseus was undoubtedly a tyrant and a traitor; Trelawny in open rebellion, and suspected of tampering with the Turks, who were very anxious to get possession of the cave; but all this might have been forgiven, had they not previously been the personal foes of the Director-General of Western Greece.'

For the first twenty days after being wounded, I remained in the same place and posture, sitting and leaning against the rock, determined to leave everything to nature. I did not change or remove any portion of my dress, nor use any extra covering. I would not be bandaged, plastered, poulticed, or even washed; nor would I move or allow any one to look at my wound. I was kept alive by yolks of eggs and water for twenty days. It was forty days before there was any sensible diminution of pain; I then submitted to have my body sponged with spirit and water, and my dress partly changed. I was reduced in weight from thirteen stone to less than ten, and looked like a galvanised mummy. I was first tempted to try and eat by seeing my Italian eating raw ham of a wild hog which I had shot and cured; by great effort I opened my mouth sufficiently to introduce a piece of the size of a shilling, notwithstanding the agony of moving my fractured jaw, and by degrees managed to devour it, and from that time gathered strength, I suppose from the affinity of our Saxon nature to hog; excepting coffee, I refused all wishy-washy or spoon-food and stuck to wild boar, which in turn stuck to me; it spliced my bones and healed my flesh, excepting my right arm, which was shrivelled up and paralysed.

In three months after I had been wounded, my hurts were healing, and my health returning, but my right arm was painful, withered, and paralysed, my

only hope of regaining the use of it was to get the ball extracted; and for that purpose a surgeon was indispensable.

Ghouras had been nominated to the command of Eastern Greece, as the stipulated payment for his treachery to his former chief, but the Turks held all the plains. So we were environed with foes and closely watched, but my trusty and zealous friends the Klephtes were always on the alert; nestling with the eagles amongst the most inaccessible crags by day, and coming down with the wolves at night, they supplied us with fresh provisions and kept us informed of everything that took place around. They even brought me a Klephtes surgeon, stipulating to kill him if he did not cure me; he made an incision with a razor under my breastbone, and poked about with his finger to find the ball but in vain; the Klephtes then proposed to escort me to any place I chose to go to for a Frank doctor, or to kidnap one at Athens, and bring him to me, and to leave their families as hostages. I had perfect faith in their probity, but lingered on hoping for a change. Soon after this, Zepare, one of their leaders, brought me news at night that his men were on the trail of a Frank, and they would bring him to me: he said a medico, for they believe all the Franks are more or less so, from their habit of carrying and giving medicines. The next morning a party of soldiers arrived, escorting the major who so astonished Odysseus and the Turkish Bey at Talanta by his eccentricity. I was even more surprised now than then at meeting him. It appeared he had never lost sight of me. When he heard I was in peril, he made several unsuccessful attempts to come to me; he then took a cruise in search of the Commodore on the station, Hamilton, and stated my case. Hamilton,

always prompt in acts of humanity, insisted on the government's not only permitting the major to have free access to me, but that I should have liberty to embark in one of his ships, if I chose to do so. After some days of deliberation and consultation with Odysseus' widow, and the inmates of the cave, I reluctantly agreed to take advantage of this favourable occasion; my trusty crew promised to remain at their posts until my return, or until the enemies of their former chief, then in power, were ousted, and then to be guided by circumstances. No sooner had I left than Ghouras closely invested the place. The eagerness of both the Greeks and Turks to possess the cave, arose from the stories current in that land of lies, of the fabulous treasures it contained. The cupidity of the Greeks was lashed up to frenzy; every stratagem their subtle wits could devise was tried; crouching behind every rock and tree, they kept up a continual fusillade; they might as well have fired at the man in the moon, as at the men in the mountain—if they came too near, the Hungarian stopped them with a shower of grape from the cannon. Some months after, when men and things were changed, the inmates of the cavern came to terms with some of the old friends of the late chief, who had always used their influence to protect the cave, as well they might, since much of the plunder they had accumulated during the war was deposited within it. If the Hungarian Camerone had served in any other country than Greece in a time of war he would have ranked high, for he was a well-trained warrior, skilful, resolute and modest; he had been nearly two years in Greece, when I fell in with him at Missolonghi, serving without pay or promotion: noted he certainly was, for his valour had been conspicuous in many battles.

CHAPTER XXVI

Victory! Victory. Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death, when monarchs speak.

SHELLEY.

WHEN the Muses deserted Parnassus, the Klephtes, i. e. outlaws, took possession of their haunts, and kept alive the love of freedom and the use of arms. They were the only Greeks I found with any sense of honour; they kept their words and fulfilled their engagements; I protected and fed their families, and they escorted me in all my expeditions; I was continually in their power, yet they never attempted to betray me. The Klephtes were the only efficient soldiers at the commencement of the insurrection; and their leaders maintained the war for three years, so successfully that the Greek government were enabled to borrow money. The government then resolved to divide the forces of the Klephtes, to appoint their own partisans as leaders, and to conduct the war themselves; they raised forces and imprisoned the former military leaders, wasted time in disputing about their plans of campaigns, and the nomination of the commissioners to see that they were carried out. In two scientific campaigns carried on by civilians, the Greeks lost all the territory the former arbitrary chiefs had won; and of the foreign loan, 2,800,000*l.*, there remained only five shillings in bad money at the close of those campaigns. If there had been any place of refuge, the insurrection would have ended by the flight of the leaders and submission of the people. The members of the government sent away the money they had em-

bezzled, and the Primates and other rich rascals attempted to escape with their families, but they were stopped by the populace.

Greece was reconquered; the vanquished Christians sat in sullen groups round the walls of their only remaining fortress in the Morea; death, or to resume the Moslem's chains, their only alternative. At this critical period a messenger arrived from Navarino, proclaiming, in the words of our great poet,

> 'News, friends; our wars are done, the Turks are drowned.'

The people now sprang up frantic with joy.

For six years all the Christian states had been standing looking on at the bloodiest insurrection on record, sympathising with the unbelieving Ottomans. At the twelfth hour, the three great maritime Leviathans turned round, and, falling unexpectedly upon their ancient allies, annihilated them.

The policy of the crafty Muscovite is intelligible. He wanted to possess Greece and cripple his natural enemy, the Turk. He did both at little cost; the Ottoman fleet was destroyed, and Greece converted from a Turkish into a Russian Hospodariat. The policy of France and England is inexplicable; it is one of those inscrutable diplomatic mysteries devised by heaven-born ministers, which men of women born cannot comprehend.

From the beginning to the end of the insurrection in Greece, Commodore Rowan Hamilton and Colonel C. J. Napier were the only English officers in command who acted justly and generously to the Greeks. Sir Thomas Maitland, and his successor, Sir Frederick Adams, High Commissioners of the Ionian Islands, from their natural sympathy with tyranny, favoured the Turks on all occasions. Napier was high-minded

and independent in his opinions, which is always a disqualification in the eyes of officials. His general popularity and superior influence with the Ionians mortified Sir Frederick Adams excessively; he did all he could in his official capacity to thwart Napier; he gave vent to his rancour in the most trivial matters; he even sent an official letter to Napier on the impropriety of his wearing moustachios. The colonel was very much amused at this despatch; he instantly obeyed the mandate by cutting them off, and enclosing them in his reply to the Lord High Commissioner, who, no doubt, forwarded this important correspondence, with the enclosure, to the Commander-in-Chief. If these emblems of war are preserved amongst the trophies at the Horse Guards, the hair may be used as the lion's beard is by the Indians—they burn it, and swallow the ashes, believing it will give them the strength and courage of the lion.

It was particularly revolting to the mind as well as feelings of Napier, to witness the war as waged in Greece,—without a plan, combination, system or leader; every man frantic with excitement to kill and plunder on his own account. Napier, as I have before said, would have undertaken the war when he was solicited by the Greeks to do so, if they had complied with the terms he considered indispensable to their success, which were that he should have uncontrolled power over the army. Whilst the Greek government were treating with Napier, a distinguished French officer, Colonel Fabvier, volunteered his services without any stipulations, and was accepted. Napier having no other object than the success of a just cause, pointed out to me on the map the strategy and tactics he should have used at that juncture, had he commanded the Greek forces in the Morea. I asked him to write his plan, as the

art of war is so little studied by our military men. I transcribe a campaign on scientific principles, as improvised on the exigency of the moment, by the great master of the art; the general principles laid down by so skilful a commander are applicable to any other locality in all times, especially in defensive warfare, and it requires no prophet to foretel there will be many such wars ere the lamb lies down with the lion.

Napier's letters not only exemplify the skill of the soldier, but show the frank, generous, manly character of the man. Byron, in a letter to the Greek committee from Cephalonia, in 1823, speaking of Colonel Napier, says, 'Of his military character, it is superfluous to speak, of his personal, I can say, from my own knowledge as well as from all rumour or private report, that it is as excellent as his military; in short, a better or a braver man is not easily to be found; he is our man to lead a regular force, or to organise a national one for the Greeks,—ask the army—ask any one.'

The following letters are addressed to me by this great general:—

26th May, 1826.

Circumstances must decide in war, speaking generally, but frequently they may be commanded by able arrangements; instead of waiting to see what an enemy will do, he may be often forced to do that which we want him to do. I think this may be now accomplished by the Greek troops, should Ibrahim Pacha besiege Napoli di Romania. In this event, I conclude he will have about 15,000 men, and that he will draw his supplies from Navarin or Modon, a distance of about eighty miles; and have an intermediate depôt at Tripolitza, which is about

twenty-five from Napoli. These roads pass through the mountains, and great difficulties will arise in marching his convoys, both from the nature of the country itself, and the exposure to constant attacks.

I also conclude that the Greek forces will amount to about 6,000 regulars and 10,000 irregulars, exclusive of the garrison of Napoli, in which I would leave only irregulars, the best to be had; taking the worst, with the whole regular force, to Monemvasia, into which place I would throw in as much provision as possible; and leaving this fortress with the smallest possible garrison picked from the irregulars, but (as well as Napoli di Romania) with the most *resolute governor and engineers*, I would issue forth and throw the whole regular and remaining irregular force on the communications of the besieging army.

The point at which I would cut them must be *determined* by local circumstances, viz., the force of the enemy; the distribution of that force; the nature of the country; and the exact knowledge of distances, or rather *times of march*. By this, the Greek army would oblige the Egyptian army to *raise the siege*, or to *send a force able* to *clear the road of the Greek army*, or he must go without provisions; if he raises the siege, such a failure, besides its actual cost, would have an immense moral effect to his prejudice, and enable the Greeks to take more bold measures; in short, it would be, what they have yet not seen, a victory produced by sound principles of war.

If he prefers the second way, viz., to send a force which he thinks capable of clearing the road, and re-opening his communications, what is the consequence? His army must be so weakened that the siege cannot be continued with vigour; and the detached force will either be fought and defeated by the Greeks, or they would retire before this force into

Maina, and even to Monemvasia. The moment this was done, this detached force would again march to join Ibrahim before Napoli; and would be followed up by the Greek army, which would again occupy its old position on the communication. This might be repeated twice or three times; but it is impossible that Ibrahim could continue this game long, and the moment he ceased to play it, he would be obliged to raise the siege. It seems difficult to say how this plan could fail, unless the Greek commander allowed the force detached against him to cut him off from Monemvasia, or from wherever he drew his subsistence.

As to the third choice, it is evident that he could not adopt it, as, although his Egyptians may live upon little, yet that little they must have; he would therefore try to receive his supplies from Patras; and although there would, perhaps, be more difficulty still, the Greek general might play the same game on that line of operation, as he would on the line with Navarin. He might occupy the *last* with his regulars, and detach his irregulars on the first. A Turkish force could hardly venture against the Greek irregulars, having their left flank exposed to the regular army of Greeks. I do not know whether I have clearly explained my meaning; but I am sure that if the Greek government will do what they ought, viz., give Colonel Fabvier the full and uncontrolled direction of the war, or do this with Colonel Gordon, both those gentlemen will see what I mean, and that this plan is formed on sound strategetical principles.

It is impossible to believe that any force which Ibrahim could detach would be able to force six thousand regular Greek soldiers through the passes of the Mainiote country back upon Monemvasia. I have only supposed the *worst* in supposing that

they would do this, but in point of fact I imagine the Greek regular force could occupy some strong position in which it would force the troops detached against it to give battle under every disadvantage; and should the Greeks be defeated, that they might rally at and defend a multitude of defiles in the strong country between Tripolitza and Monemvasia —all these things are details of the execution, which depend on the talents of the commanders. If this commander is Colonel Fabvier with Colonel Gordon supporting him, there is no doubt in my mind of its success; if the Greek force, on the contrary, is commanded by the Greek General-in-Chief, Colocotroni, it must inevitably fail, as he is incapable of even comprehending, much less of executing such a campaign.

In regard to the number of forces that I have supposed on each side, it is not very material that I should be exact, because the principle will hold good as long as the disproportion between the opposed armies is not *so great* as to put an end to all opposition, and this is a disproportion so vast that in such a country as Greece I can hardly conceive possible. Supposing that the Turkish forces receive their provision by sea, then they would not perhaps detach a force against the Greek army coming from Monemvasia, which might attack Tripolitza at its leisure: this, I suspect, would quickly produce the desired results! And last, though not least important, one has everything to expect from Lord Cochrane, who will not allow this provision to arrive by sea so easily. Are we to suppose that one of the greatest men of the age, for such he decidedly is, will be unable to effect anything against the enemy? Lord Cochrane's whole life has been a series of proofs that he possesses all the qualities of a great commander.

Dear Trelawny,

When I returned from my ride, I wrote down what I said;—if you think it would be of any use, send it to Gordon. Not but that both he and Fabvier could form this plan as well or better than I, but my own opinion may have some weight with the Greeks, in support of those held by these two officers. For my own part, I would try this plan had I but *one* thousand men and *one* cannon! so convinced am I that it is a sound one; and that if executed with skill, activity, and courage it would make Ibrahim lose his game.

Yours,

C. Napier.

I dare say this is full of errors, for I wrote as fast as I could scribble; keep it, for I have no copy. I wish you to give me one.

Cephalonia, 20th June, 1826.

Dear Trelawny,

Many thanks for your note dated 12th, which I have only this morning received. I hear Hastings has reached Napoli, which I hope will help Gordon to make arrangements. I hear that Ibrahim Pacha has taken and fortified Sparta.—If he can occupy Leondari and Sparta with strong detachments, he may render the execution of my plan difficult; but if he divides his forces with such numerous garrisons, the question arises, whether or not he can keep the field? However, he would greatly embarrass all operations by fortifying Leondari and Mistra (Sparta). These posts are, at this moment, the real points of 'strategy' for the defence of Napoli; and his seizure of them denotes a good

military head. Were I in Gordon's place, supposing him master of his movements, I would make them keep their *vigils* in Sparta. That garrison should have no sinecure; but my fear is, that at Napoli they are all in such a state of confusion and ignorance, that he will not be able to make any movements at all. However, all I can say is, that the loss of any strong post demands that the Greeks should act upon the same principle against those posts that would have been acted upon against the original positions of the Turks. The general principle remains the same, but is applied to a different locality. For example (take your map).—When Mistra is held by the Turks, the Greeks can no longer throw themselves on the line of communication between Tripolitza and Navarin. They must then change their *object*, and throw themselves on the line between Mistra; and from wherever the garrison draws its provisions, Mistra becomes the object instead of Tripolitza. How this is to be accomplished, God knows. The war is, in this instance, on too small a scale to judge by a map, as I could in a large movement acting against Tripolitza; but military talent, in a country like the Morea, finds ways to do what it wants. The grand secret in *mountain* countries is to *isolate* the enemy, which obliges him to abandon *his strong* position, and attack you in *yours*. It is not to one so well acquainted with the country as you are, that I need say what it would be to attack a good position in Greece, even without fortifications, much more with them.

It is in the art of forcing an enemy to fight you on your own chosen ground, that military genius consists, and few things are more difficult in practice. It unites so much theory and so much practice

with great fearlessness of character, no timid man will throw himself into those decisive positions which produce great results.

Yours truly,

C. NAPIER.

Cephalonia, 1*st August*, 1826.

MY DEAR TRELAWNY,

Pray do not let Mr. Ruppenthal say that I made proposals to him, without contradicting him, because I did no such thing. I think I know what he is; but be he what he may, he can make nothing of my letters that can do me any harm, supposing he should be a bad one. When one has *no secrets* it is hard to discover them!

I hope Gordon has made port. I do not understand Fabvier's movements. I dare say they are not voluntary. I give no man credit for doing what he likes—what is wise—in Greece; until I hear that he has 2,000 good European drilled soldiers at his back, and 100,000 in his pockets, and a gallows with his advanced guard. I think were I there with the only power that would tempt me to go, I should raise the price of hemp 50 per cent. in ten days. What has become of Lord Cochrane? all hands say *he comes*—but he comes not! With kind regards to Gordon if he is with you, believe me,

Yours hastily,

C. J. NAPIER.

I wish to God something may be done for the Greeks, for our orders are positive not to admit fugitives, and really though I think the rules laid down by the government are just, it is very distressing to execute them,—at least to me it is so.

APPENDIX

TRANSLATION FROM THE ITALIAN

This Sixteenth day of August, 1822, at 4 o'clock, P.M.

We Domenico Simoncini captain and official of the maritime quarantine of the city of Viareggio, in consequence of orders communicated by his Excellency the governor of the said city, President of the Quarantine Commission, in paper No. 90; together with which is sent a copy of the dispatch of his Excellency the Minister of State of the 27th of last month, No. 384, whereby the Quarantine Office is informed that our august Sovereign has granted the request made by the British Legation to be allowed to remove the mortal remains of Mr. Shelley, brought to land by the waves of the sea, on the 18th day of July, where they were buried according to the quarantine rules in force.

E. J. Trelawny, commanding the schooner *Bolivar*, with the English flag, presented himself to us, authorised by the Consul of Her Britannic Majesty with a paper from the same, dated 13th of this present month, which he produced: attended by this gentleman, by the Mayor commanding the place, and the Royal Marine of the Duchy, and by his Excellency Lord Noel Byron, an English peer, we proceeded to the eastern shore, and arrived at the spot where the above mentioned corpse had been buried. After recognition made, according to the legal forms of the tribunal, we caused the ground to be opened and

found the remains of the above-mentioned corpse. The said remains were placed in an iron furnace, there burnt and reduced to ashes. After which, always in the presence of those above-mentioned, the said ashes were placed in a box lined with black velvet, which was fastened with screws; this was left in the possession of the said E. J. Trelawny to be taken to Leghorn.

The present report is made in double original of the whole of the above proceeding, and is signed by us, and the above named gentlemen,

E. J. Trelawny.

Dco. Simoncini.

Noel Byron.

Commissione Sanitaria,
Marittima, Viareggio,
Duchy of Lucca.

The body mentioned in the following letter as found near Massa, was that of Charles Vivian.

TRANSLATION

Via Reggio, August 29, 1822.

Respected Sir,

I return infinite thanks for the excellent telescope which you have had the kindness to send me, and assure you that I shall ever bear in mind the attention I have received from you. I hope that some favourable occasion may occur when I may be called upon to attend to your honoured commands, and request you freely to dispose of me in anything in which I can be of service in these parts. I have delayed some days before answering your esteemed letter of the

22nd of this month, in respect of receiving from Massa the information you desired, which is as follows:

The same day, the 18th July, when the sea cast on shore the body of Signore Shelley, there was thrown up on the shores of Massa another corpse which could not be recognised, from its having been eaten about the head by fish. It had on a cotton waistcoat, and white and blue striped trowsers; a cambric shirt;—and was without shoes. This body was burnt on the shore, and the ashes interred in the sand. At Montignoso the sea threw up a water-barrel; at Cinguale, an empty demijohn and two bottles; and at Motrone, a small boat painted red and black.

This is the news I have been able to obtain, with reference to the misfortune which has happened, and to my own knowledge. If I should meet with any further information, I shall consider it my duty to communicate it forthwith.

Accept the expression of my distinguished esteem and respect,

Your most humble and obedient servant,

Dco. Simoncini.

THE END

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